

8.

Paul and Allegedly the Sabbath
The Three “Parallel” Scriptures

No translation of the so-called three “parallel” Scriptures considered here could be trusted. Traditional translations should rather be seen for the **manipulations of the text** that they are to suite the Church and its **observance of Sunday**. The Church is disobedient in offering *Corban* through Sunday-observance in the **Sabbath’s** stead. In the same proud spirit it parades **disrespect for the Word** with translation of passages bearing on the Sabbath and **Sunday** issue: Concerning the chronology of the crucifixion and resurrection, Mk.15:42, Mt.27:57, Lk.23:48, Mt.28:1; about allegedly the keeping of the First Day, Acts 20:7, Jn.20:19; about allegedly the keeping of the Sabbath, these “parallel” texts, Ro.14:5-6, Col.2:16-17 and Gal.4:10. The time is past that one could sympathise with the Church for its renderings and interpretations with respect to these passages. The Church no longer can be accidentally mistaken. Its attempts to present the Scriptures’ own meaning in these Scriptures are not honest, but regularly are calculated misrepresentations.

Wrote Tyndale, *“I take God, which alone seeth the heart, to record to my conscience, beseeching Him that my part be not in the blood of Christ, if I wrote of all that I have written throughout all my books, aught of an evil purpose ... or to stir up any false doctrine or opinion in the Church of Christ ... As concerning all I have translated ... I beseech all men to read it for that purpose I wrote it even to bring them to the knowledge of the Scripture. And as far as the Scripture approve it, so far to allow it; and if in any place the Word of God disallow it, then to refuse it, as I do before our Saviour Christ and his congregation.”* Quoted from J.H. Merle d’Aubigné, *The Reformation in England*, Volume Two, p. 190/191, Banner of Truth 1972.

How sad then, that **it has become a safe rule for interpretation of our passages of Scripture, to look for just the opposite meaning their accepted translations offer**. Thus for Romans 14:5-7 look for the “weak” to be the “strong” and the “strong” to be the “weak”. Look for the problem to be a Christian one and not a Jewish. Don’t look for the Sabbath, but for “food and drink”. For Colossians 2:15-17 again don’t look for the Sabbath, but for “food and drink”. Look for the judging to come under Paul’s judgement and not the ones usually judged. Look for Paul’s condoning and defence of those who keep the Sabbath, and not their condemnation! For Galatians 4:9-10 look for the problem to be a heathen one and not a Christian. Look for Sunday and not the Sabbath as

the “weak and beggarly principle”! Look for the problem to be one of backsliding to **idolatrous** principles and not to **Old Testament** practices.

8.1.

Romans 14:5

8.1.1.

Freedom of Discipleship

Dr W.D. Jonker’s caption for the section Romans 14:1 to 15:13 reads, *“Love and the Weak Brother”*.

The Old Afrikaans Bible (1933) summarises the message of Romans 14, *“Forbearance with the weak in faith”*.

The NAB’s heading is, *“Do not condemn your brother”*.

But the Authorised Version, - **even it**, comes with, **“Limits of Christian Liberty”**!

E.C. Hoskyns’ *“impression”* of Karl Barth, *“Die Krisis des freien Lebensversuchs”* (*Der Römerbrief*). Reverend Robert A. Lotzer calls the *“problem of division”* in the Church at Rome, *“the Crisis of human freedom and detachment”*.

In this *“krisis”* of Christian freedom Romans 14 speaks about, the danger exists **to lord it over** one’s neighbour and **not to allow one’s neighbour the freedom one, as a Christian, claims for oneself**.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters Paul’s concern is not **only** about the **individual** freedom of forgiven man, but also not **only** about mutual **congregational** respect and compassion. Paul’s view and understanding of the congregational acceptance and support of one another reflects his **broader concept wherein God adopts and justifies the weak** – wherein **God** takes ownership and the **only Holy Lord** justifies **all, sinners, unconditionally**. **If God so love us**, how should not we love one another? **If God** does not condemn the weak, how could **we**? **If we** (who, when saved were sinners and although saved are sinners still) are righteous in the sight of **God** because justified in **Jesus the Lord**, how could we judge **one another**? How could we judge one another on **“minor issues”** or **“grudgingly”** (14:1)? **“Therefore thou art inexcusable, o man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou that judgest doest the same things ... things worthy of death”**, 2:1 and 1:32!

“Judging” and “despising” one another – **Christians** doing so – betray **pride and jealousy, sins, “worthy of death”**. Then to judge one another on things like “food” and the “regard” for “days”, things **not** ‘worthy of death’ (14:1, *“adiaphora”*: **“trivialities” / “indifferent things”**), is unimaginable!

Commentators, in fact, the **Church, today**, no different than the Church at Rome, focus on **“foods”** and **“factions”** for no **purpose** but to **judge** people who “regard” and “esteem” “days”, and to **despise** people

who do not even “regard” or “esteem” “days”, but keep the **Sabbath!** But Paul draws the attention inescapably to the **essential sin** that so to speak is worthy of his plainest condemnation – no other sin than is condemned by the “greatest” Freedom Charter, the Law to “love thy neighbour as thyself”. (Chapter 13)

“Paul’s exhortation ends – and its ending concludes the whole Pauline ‘conversation’ – with a warning to all who find themselves in entire agreement with what has been said and are persuaded that their own opinions have been fully confirmed. Once again these busy hands are held back; once again the energy of partisans is damped down, and their oratory interrupted. ... Once again it is the fact of the existence of our fellow men – the ethical problem – by which we are brought face to face with the great disturbance”. (Barth, Romans)

Paul discusses “food and drink” and the Christian “regard” of “days” and **discovers** *“the great disturbance”!* The “food and drink” and “regard” of “days” is nothing wrong with or, rather, was nothing wrong with. Even the different **opinions** on these things should be accepted and be tolerated in good Christian spirit **because of the moment in history**. **Fellow Christians then** allowed one another no **free** “regard”. They **“judged”** and **“despised”** each other’s **deeds, motives and sincerity**, missing the Freedom of being servant of Christ, passing by the fact of His having come and died and having been raised ... “for us”, not even seeing it! Fellow Christians **today** act no different.

The Church’s was a **controversial** spirit. **Distrust** of fellow Church members’ sincerity and genuineness of confession and faith lay beneath the **spirit of judgement** that ruled in the Congregation at Rome. **‘You are not a (good) Christian** if you **don’t** eat the meat of our traditional feast-meals’, the one party challenged. **‘You are not a (good) Christian** if you **do**’, the other party retorted. **“You quibble and fight amongst yourselves”**, says Paul. **“You judge and despise”**, which is not Christ’s way. Paul **in Christian spirit** reminds the Church, **“He is grateful to God** who while regarding the day regards it to the Lord’s honour, and while eating eats to the Lord’s honour”, 14:6. **You may not despise! ... you may not judge! ... God** receives and accepts the weak. Who are **you** who judge the **Master’s** servant? The servant stands with his **Master!** Yea, the weak brother **shall be kept upright because God** makes him stand! ... We are the **Lord’s**. Christ **died and rose** again in order **to be Lord** of his own, dead or alive (weak or strong). **Why** then do you judge your brother and humiliate him? We shall **all** stand before the judgement seat of **Christ** as it is written, As I live says the Lord, every knee shall bow to **Me** and every tongue shall confess (**Me**) **God** (verses 10-11). Each of us will give account, of **himself, to God** (not on behalf of anyone else and not **to** the strong in the Church, 14:12)! **Stop**

condemning one another and rather take a stand that no one shall be the cause of his brother’s offence! (13)

Paul **accepts** the state of affairs that the Church differentiates and **“regards” some days above others**. He has no word to say against the practice. The fact that Paul could live with it shows **of what nature** the “estimation / regard” of certain days was. It was “Lawful”, it was in accordance with the principle of love that is – the very principle the Church **violated by judging one another**. The “estimation / regard” of certain days was the **usual** and happened according to the **custom of Christian Faith**, but Christian Faith was weak and human, deplorable and violent, brother despising and judging brother.

“The problem of division” even, was only **symptomatic** of the real problem of **pride and want of love**. Paul’s **uncompromising condemnation** cannot be overlooked. But Paul’s is **not** a condemnation of the **regarding of days or the regard for days or of the eating of certain foods**; his is the condemnation of Christians’ **judging and despising one another**. There is no justification for this **great sin**. This **sin** was *“beggarly”* because it reveals the Church’s **basic want of love - the breaking of God’s Law**.

Believers were divided over **“food and drink”**, no doubt. But they were not thus divided over “days” and the “esteem” of days though. “Esteem of **days**” wasn’t their **sin** or as much as a **symptom** of their **real** sickness, the **sin** of **self-“esteem”**. Nevertheless, “food and drink” were symptomatic of their sickness. “Food and drink”, was made the **excuse for division**, while the **cause** of division, **haughtiness** – was **the real sin**.

Every faction at Rome “regarded” whatever they “regarded” and “esteemed” **“unto the Lord (Jesus’ honour)”**. **Or that was what Paul supposed every faction would!** But did they? No! They at Rome “regarded” and “esteemed” “days” **unto lord Self** as they ate and drank or abstained meticulously **unto lord Self!**

Paul’s tolerance of the **observance of “days”** astonishes not. He accepts a **fact**, the fact of the Christian Church’s “regard” and “esteem” for “days”. He shows **no antipathy** towards the practice. **But he waits no moment** to denounce in simplest language the **actual** malady. **“Who art thou?”** “Days” are not **intended** for **self-“esteem”** and “food” for a **“stumbling block”**. They are meant unto charity and humble faith. The problem lay with **man** – with the **Church** – with the **heart**. Nothing was wrong with the whole Church’s “regard” for and “esteem” of “days” **had the brethren at Rome only “regarded” and “esteemed” one another!**

8.1.1.1.

“Free Indeed”, John 8:36

We Christians of **later** centuries have no right to judge or despise the Church of **Paul’s day** for the “regard” and “esteem” it paid its “days”.

We should have sympathy with them and show them the same charity that Paul pleaded for when he wrote his letter to the Romans. We stand under greater obligation not to judge or despise them because we today stand at greater distance and can discern clearer the obsolescence of “regarded” and “esteemed” “days”. **Thanks to the passing of time** we are able to obtain a truer perspective on Christ’s fulfilment of all “days” that could possibly have had “regard” and “esteem” for their cultural as well as religious value in the early times of a predominantly Jewish Church. But we cannot accept the following as a confession of uncompromised faith in Jesus Christ who for the believer is the end as well as the meaning of all things:

“Exiled, without an altar and without sacrifice, the Jewish people felt a deep need to remember and rehearse the great things Jehovah had done for them in days past. They clung to the hope that once again He might do marvellous things for his people. It is fitting that this hope should continue to burn in the hearts of God’s chosen people, for ‘the gifts and calling of God are without repentance’ (Romans 11:29). Against all odds, through centuries of oppression and struggle, the Jewish people survived. They nurtured the memories of the past and fervently looked for a future deliverance. Each Jewish family, each small community, bore the responsibility of keeping a spark of faith alive in the darkness and despair of exile. The holidays and traditions – links in the chain of survival – became more important than ever. So the celebration of ‘Seasons of our deliverance’ (Passover) took on new meaning and a new setting.” (Ceil and Moishe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover*, p. 63)

Jesus Christ

is the altar and sacrifice of God,
the great thing Jehovah had done,
the hope, gift and calling of God without repentance.

Jesus Christ

burns in the hearts of God’s chosen people
The memories of the past are **Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ**

is fervently looked for as the future deliverance

Each **Christian** family, each small **Christian** community bears the responsibility of keeping a spark of faith alive in the darkness and despair of exile.

The holidays and traditions **no longer** are links in the chain of survival but **Christ Jesus** is the Life and the Way, the hope of glory, the survival of his chosen People, the **Church**.

Christ Jesus

has become more important than ever.

So the celebration of ‘Seasons of our deliverance’
– **“God’s Rest”** – has taken on new meaning and a new setting because it took on new meaning and a new setting in **Jesus Christ being resurrected from the dead ... “in the Sabbath”!**

8.1.1.2.

A Most Practical Solution to the Threat of Christian Freedom

Paul proposes a **most practical solution** to the issue at Rome, and his proposal leaves no doubt what the **real** trouble was. Paul proposes **compromise**. His proposal involves habits or rather customs – customs of **food, simply**: “**It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine** nor to do anything whereby your brother may stumble or might be offended or might be weakened.”

If “**regard**” of “**days**” had been “anything whereby thy brother might stumble or be offended or weakened”, why doesn’t Paul **include “days”** with the **specific things** whereby “thy brother might stumble or be offended or weakened” – why doesn’t he **include “days”** with “**to eat flesh**” and “**to drink wine**”? **Because no one was** offended, weakened or led to stumble by the Church’s “**regard**” of “**days**”, Paul does not include it with “**to eat flesh**” and “**to drink wine**”. The issue wasn’t “**days**”, or, **about “days**”. The issue **wasn’t even** “meat” – food, **itself**, but **about food!** It was **about** food, **because**, the **differences** revolved around foods, and it revolved around foods, **because**, deep down **beneath the spewing crater** there was the **seething bowls of the earth**. “Food” was the appearance; lack of love the cause.

Verse 22 tells about the **inner** sickness, “**Hast thou faith?**” Faith isn’t to **parade** and **compare**. “Have it **to thyself before God!**” “Happy is he that **condemns** not **himself** in that thing which he **admires** (in himself).” Christian **faith** is not **affectation**. “Charity **suffers long** and is **kind**; charity **envies** not, is not **jealous**; charity **vaunts** not itself, does not **intimidate**; charity is not **puffed up**”, “but **bears the infirmities of the weak**”. **Pride** affects one’s own **condemnation!**

The problem at Rome is **universal and timeless**. It is judged in the light of Romans 13:8. If **we of today** lived then, we with **our proud heart** would have done no better than the poor Christians of Rome. Paul pleaded for one thing only: Remember how God loved you and so love one another. God when He saved you did not judge and condemn **you or us** no matter how low He had to reach for **you or us**. Don’t judge and condemn one another. Keep your “days” and make “feast” and everything will be just fine as long as it all is “to the honour of the Lord”, and you “thank God” in humble **remembrance of your own lost state** when He found and saved you. Cf. 1Cor.5:7-8.

Jewish scruples and parochialism is not Paul's concern.

For Paul the whole problem revolves around one's **motive**, whether one's "**beliefs**" - "*persuasions*", are to the **honour of God** and to the best interest of peace and **brotherly harmony**. And the **life's situation** of Paul's time was a Christianity that on the one hand was still in the process of accommodating itself 'theologically' to **New Testament** customs and concepts. On the other hand the **life's situation** of Paul's time was a Christianity that was still in the process of accommodating itself **socially!** Jews and Gentiles actually became one People of Jesus Christ, which sounds nice and easy today but at the time spelled innumerable obstacles to **unity**. Part of Paul's and the Church's life's situation of course was **human nature**. Anybody disagreeing is judged. Paul says, No! A Christian is **servant of his Lord Jesus**, and a judging spirit is most undesirable in a situation of such diverse lineage, tradition, culture and opinion! (The scene today still exists.)

The weak as the strong of whom Paul speaks in Romans 14 were God's Kingdom. They all stood with the Lord. Christ was the King of all, of the strong as well as of the weak. The problem with the Church at Rome was that they could not or would not accept the fact. The one regarded himself better than the other - was **jealous of another's salvation!** The one couldn't stand the idea that this one or that one could belong to the Church of Christ. **Their sin was the sin of the Church today.** Paul's concern is with deep-rooted **self-righteousness**, the source of **arrogance**. Paul addresses these **inherent human propensities** manifested in the Church at Rome through **practical congregational issues**. Some (in effect everybody) take upon themselves the **prerogative of Christ and act the judge** over fellow-believers. In the Kingdom of God, "**righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**" is the antipode of "judging" and "belittling" one another. Paul exposes and points out directly the causal source of **resentment** in the Church at Rome - God is pleased with the **external** - with "**meat and drink**", but is **offended** by the **central** - with **pride and prejudice**.

8.1.1.2.1. The "Weak"

Paul has in mind the conflict **within the Church** when he calls on the brethren, "**Don't avenge yourselves**" but "**him that is weak** in the faith **receive ye ...**". "Weak" may indicate the **minority in the Church**. If the problem at Rome manifested itself through **Jewish custom**, then naturally the lines between opposing **parties** should be drawn between **Jew and Gentile**. But Paul does not suppose **only two** parties, and he doesn't suppose any party to **exclusively consist** of Jews or Gentiles. **Paul labelled no "party" "Gentile" or "Jewish", "weak" or "strong"**.

In **chapter 14** Paul supposes persons known as and being called the "**weak**". He mentions **two distinctive preferences** of the "weak". The "**weak**" do **not** eat "**flesh**" and do "**drink wine**". The "**weak**" are associated with the eating or not eating of certain "**foods**" / "**meats**" and **the use of wine**. No "**weak**" person or party is mentioned or suggested that "*does not drink wine*" / "*abstain from wine*" (Lotzer). On the contrary, those who "do not eat" are **identified as those who "drink wine"**! (14:21)

Although **indirectly**, Paul through these two distinctive practices of the "weak" leaves no room for doubt that **they also, like** their "opposition", "**regarded**" and "**esteemed**" "**days**". The "**weak**" "**regard all days / every day** (alike)":

15:1	We who are strong	Those who are weak
14:2	One believes that he may eat all things	Another who is weak eats herbs (only)
3	Who eats must not despise who eats not	Who eats not must not judge who eats
5	One esteems one day above another / others	Another esteems every day
	It (may therefore be) good	
21	(for him who with regard to the days eats flesh), to eat no flesh (at all)	and (for him who with regard to the days drinks wine), to drink no wine (at all)

Paul's remedy for the conflict-situation is **compromise**. His advice for the **strong**: "**Don't eat flesh**"; his advice for the **weak**: "**Don't drink wine**". (He tells nobody not to "regard" "days"! **Why and when** should one not eat flesh or drink wine? **When and because** "It is good not to do anything whereby **thy brother stumbles or is offended or is weakened** ... for whatsoever is **not done out of faith** is sin!" (14:21 and 23) In First Corinthians Paul says, "I will not eat flesh as long as the world stands **lest I make my brother to offend!**" (Ro.8:13) **How** would the brother offend, that is, transgress? By also to eat and also to drink? No, because if not an offence for the one it cannot be an offence for the other. The brother is made to offend being **misled to judge and despise!** **It is the least one can do** for the sake of peace and reconciliation **not to tempt unto doubt** thy brother - for "what is not done of faith is sin". Listen, Paul pleads, I wanted to visit you, "but I wish I by the will of God may come to you with joy and may with you be refreshed!" (15:32) *I want to experience with you your freedom and brotherly Christian love. Don't spoil it for me. Get your problems sorted out in the spirit of Christ our Lord before I come! What is the Kingdom of God? It isn't what you*

eat when you worship but **how** you eat. **Do you honour the Lord Jesus Christ with gratitude in your hearts toward God? That is the Kingdom of God, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit! Or do you fall out of line with God's Kingdom and eat with malice in your hearts and spoil the whole meaning and message of the "days" you "regard" with your eating?**

8.1.1.2.1.1.

The Weak the Weak

"The same items that the WEAK abstained from were the very same that Daniel and his friends chose to abstain from (Dan. 1:8-16). Both groups abstained from meats and wine. Could it be that this group of Jewish Christians, living in Rome, thought of themselves as once again in exile under Babylonian control?" (Reverend Robert A. Lotzer)

Christians in Rome – Jewish Christians – experienced an **identity crisis**. They felt strangers in a hostile country, firstly as Christians and then as Jews. Paul had to address an issue of **Christian** nature, and not of "**Mosaic**" nature so to speak. Jewish scruples weren't the problem but **bad Christian allegiance**. What Paul noticed in the Church at Rome didn't look like the Church, the **Kingdom of God!**

"Both groups abstained from meats and wine", Lotzer suggests. The whole issue in Rome revolved around the **Christians' mutual** differences exactly over the fact that some "**abstained**" while others **did not**. So, No, *both groups did not abstain from meats and wine. The items that the WEAK abstained from were NOT the very same that Daniel and his friends chose to abstain from.* Daniel and friends abstained through **strength of faith**; the "weak" of the Congregation in Rome abstained through **weakness of faith**. The "weak" did in fact not eat "flesh", but not because they were "strong" or vegetarians or Nazarites, but **because the "flesh" was associated with the "days"** and **because** the wine they drank **was associated with the same "days"** they regarded. The "**weak**" among the Christians ate no "flesh" but they **drank wine** and abstained not from wine as did Daniel and friends. Daniel and friends didn't have to do with the "regard" of "days". The Christians' reason for not eating was not **idolatry or gluttony** (the Babylonian King's table) **but pride**. **Christians - Jew and Gentile - not heathen** like in the case of Daniel and his friends - "**esteemed**" these "days" and "**ate**" the associated "food" – or abstained **and in their practice took such a pride that they judged and despised any Church members who might not do things so perfectly as they.**

8.1.1.2.1.2.

The Weak Divided

"Him that is **weak** in the faith receive ye, without grudging!" There is **no break between verses one and two**. Paul continues without interruption of any kind, "Him that is weak in the faith **receive ye!** And,

without grudging ... because **one** believes he may eat all things, **another**, being weak, eats vegetables". The participle *asthenohn* – "being weak", in verse 2, relates to the clause, "**him receive** ye that is weak in the faith!" **Just so** does the clause, "one believes he may eat **all things**", relate to the clause, "**him receive** ye that is weak in the faith!" The criterion for "being a weak in the faith" is neither to be a Gentile, nor to be a Jew. The criterion for "being a weak in the faith" also is **not to only eat vegetables**. One may eat **all things** and **still** be one of the **weak**. The crux of the matter is, "him that is weak in the faith **receive ye!**" **regardless** whether he eats all things or only vegetables. He is weak, **and therefore**, should be accepted among his brethren! That is how Christians should behave! Don't think you're so good because "you have faith – keep it to yourself!" "Accept the one who does **not** have as much faith as **you** have – who, in comparison with **you**, is weak in the faith!" **That** is the Kingdom of God, the freedom of discipleship! Weakness or strength in **God's Kingdom** isn't measured to **anything** else, like food and wine. Paul speaks of them whom the Church general - "**ye**", must receive! The ultimate criterion to be a "weak" is to be a "weak in the **faith!**" "You – Jewish and Gentile – brethren, should receive the weak – Gentile and Jewish – brethren, whether they are Jew or Gentile **without grudging, because they** Jewish and Gentile **are weak** in the faith! You should **allow them their freedom and preferences as you** Jewish and Gentile brethren **allow yourselves yours**. If the weak Jew or Gentile brother chooses to eat all the food on your tables of feasting, **let him eat!** If he chooses only to eat the trimmings because he is weak in the faith then **let him!**" So Paul supposes **both** parties, both **Jews and Gentiles, both Christians**, to eat **all things**, but **also** acknowledges those (**perhaps** Gentile) **Christians** who for reasons of faith, prefer **not** to eat all things.

8.1.1.2.1.3.

The Weak the Strong

"The one person", at the common feast table, "ate all", says Paul. But "the other", at the common feast table, "only ate the 'green trimmings' ". Paul leaves one without a clear-cut impression of who the weak and who the strong are. But he doesn't leave one in the dark concerning their **wrongs**. The weak **hesitatingly**, even perhaps **hypocritically, partake** of the "food". But then again, perhaps **defiantly**, the "weak" "**drink wine**" while the "opposition" drinks no wine ("but only" Passover grape juice)! Paul recommended that the "weak" should rather not drink wine lest they offend their brethren or cause them to offend. In 14:23 he says, "whatsoever is (done) **not of faith** or not "**fully convinced**" "**to the honour of the Lord**", is sin". How much more is something that is done **to** "offend", **sin** - the sin **both** 'parties' at Rome were guilty of? **Weak in the faith but strong in defiance!**

Paul could have used the description “**weak**” in a **stronger** sense than merely **sympathetically** and thus could have sided further with the “strong”. He could have meant, *These peevish or offensive Christians only eat the herbs served on the tables. But we the stronger in the faith (who are the stronger for our charity and meekness), should nevertheless not judge, despise or reject them for it. We must still support them in their weak and “dubious” (14:1) faith so that they will have greater freedom and not be fettered by “trivialities” and “doubtful disputations”*.

Paul unambiguously states that the weak “drink wine”. He may imply that they do so **to the annoyance** of the “strong” who ate and drank “all things”. Not only the strong dominated and intimidated. The weak were as proficient in offending. But both “weak” and “strong” were **so easily** offended. They were **equally resentful**, they equally **violently exchanged reproach!** The traditional portrait of the pitiable **weaklings** is as far from reality as the same tradition’s portrait of the “weak and beggarly” **villains** (who kept the Sabbath).

8.1.1.2.2.

The “Strong”

We have said above that the clause “one believes he may eat **all** things” relates to the clause “**him receive** ye that is weak in the faith!” But since Paul **unambiguously calls** “the one who does **not** eat flesh but **only** vegetables” the “**weak**”, it is just logical that “he who **eats**”, must be the “**strong**”. That should imply that Paul meant the phrase “he who **eats**” to refer to the **subject** of the clause, “him that is weak in the faith receive **ye!**” Paul does not in chapter 14 call “ye”, the “strong”; the word “strong” does not occur in the fourteenth chapter. It only appears in chapter **15** when Paul has **finished** speaking about foods and days.

Paul classes himself with the “strong”, “**we** who are strong”. The “**strong**”, supposed in chapter **fourteen**, “while regarding the day, regards it to the Lord’s honour”. The “strong”, believes he may “eat any of the food”. The “strong” **abstains** from the use of wine – both things according to the “regard” of the “days” (15:1). But that is not so important. The “strong” – as also the weak – must be “**honestly persuaded**” about their preferences of “days” - **that they “to the honour of the Lord”** Jesus Christ, “regard” it. **That is important.**

8.1.1.2.2.1.

The Jews the “Strong”!

When Paul says, “Let **us** not judge one another”, he means, ‘*Us the strong, Jewish servants of the Lord and now as Christian Jews, servants to both Jewish and Gentile believers*’. **Jews regard certain days** above others, **Jews eat foods** that had become tradition, and **Jews don’t drink wine** when it comes to Feast of Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread. Paul clearly argues and acts from the standpoint of the **Jew**.

To infer that Paul supposed a grouping of persons who were known as the “strong” is sound logic. They ate “all things”, that is, all the “food” served for the meal of the (Jewish feast) table. Christians – Jews **and** Gentiles – shared “all foods”, but it may naturally be assumed that mostly the **Jews – Christian Jews** – “observed” their festal “meats” **unscrupulously!** They distinguished not between “flesh” and “trimmings” / “greens” / “garnish” / “vegetables”. The **Jews, the “scrupulous”, were the unscrupulous!** The **Jews – the alleged “weak” Jews – were the “strong”!**

Paul salutes his readers in the letter to the Romans, “**All that be in Rome**”, 1:7. “I long to see you” says he “... that I may be comforted ... by the mutual faith of both of **you** and **me** ... that I might have some fruit among **you** also even **as** among the **other Gentiles**. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians – to both the wise (Greeks) and **unwise** (non-Greeks like the Jews)”, 1:11 to 14. It appears Paul addresses a Congregation of **Gentiles**. Paul addresses the Church of Rome as a Gentile Congregation **because of its geographic and demographic position**. The Church is a foreign, “Gentile” Church because in a foreign, Gentile **country and city**. It is clear from the **letter** that Rome’s was actually a Congregation consisting of mostly **Jews**. Even if the word “**other**” – *loipos*, is **omitted** from the clause, “that I might have some fruit among **you** also even **as** among the (**other**) **Gentiles**” (1:13), it conveys the idea that Paul addresses a **Jewish** Congregation. *Loipos* quite often is almost meaningless and could simply be translated, “**those**”, as in Phi.4:3, 1Th.4:13, Eph.4:17, Gl.2:13, 1 Cor.13:2. In fact, if translated “others” an opposite impression might be created, as in 1Th.4:13, “I would not have you to be ignorant ... even as **others who have no hope**” which implies the Thessalonians **also** are supposed as if without hope.

Paul in Romans 14 and 15 **as a Jew identifies** with the addressees. The fact that Paul discusses “days” and “meats” corresponding to the practices of the “**Jewish**” **feasts** shows that the addressees were **Jewish** Christians. That the Congregation at Rome consisted mostly of Jews is confirmed **historically**. When Nero banned the Jews from Rome he made no distinction between them and the Christians. Historians estimate there were more Jews in Rome at the time than in Jerusalem. What contingent of the Jews was Christian is impossible to say except that the Christians made a greater impact than the Jews upon the history of the Empire. From these Scriptures it is inevitable to conclude that the relations between **Jews** and the state also existed between the **Christian** Jews and the state – between the **Church** and the state. The fact was that when the Jews were expelled from Rome **no distinction** was made between **Jews general** and **Christians general**. The Church – **the whole Christian Church** – was expelled **with the Jews**.

In 14:1 Paul admonishes, “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye”. Who are “ye”? They were **conversant with the Law**, 13:9-10 – the **Jews**. Then Paul addresses them in 12:19, “Dearly beloved, **avenge** not yourselves”. In 13:1 Paul warns them, Let every soul be subject unto the **higher powers**”. That pictures the **contemporary historic situation** in Rome of the **Jews** and tense relations with the state authorities. Paul tells the **Jews**, the “**strong**”, *submit to the civil powers and don’t try to be so strong and avenge yourselves on the authorities.*

8.1.1.2.2.2.

A Congregation of Jews the Majority

The Christian community in Rome as a whole found itself in a **minority**-position in a singular way. “Let every soul be subject to the **higher powers** (of state).” They were not only of comparatively **few** numbers (Not so **few** compared to Jewish populations elsewhere – it is estimated the Jews counted about 60,000 in Rome.) but also of little or no political **power**. The **Christians as Jews** not only demographically formed a minority, but as **Christians** they formed a minority within a minority of **unbelieving Jews**. They were **estranged** from their **kin**. They were insignificant in **every respect**. In such an **isolated and vulnerable** community as in Rome each Jewish Christian thought it his sacred duty to protect his nationality and cultural heritage, as he thought best.

After having reasoned about “**man**” without distinction, 2:1 to 16, Paul in verse 17 returns to addressing the **Congregation** ... this time as if they are **Jews!** “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and resteth in the law ... an instructor of the **foolish** (Gentiles)”, 2:17, 20. “The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through **you** (Jews)”, verse 24! In 3:9 Paul **contrasts** himself and the Congregation with Gentiles: “What then, are **we** (**Jews**) better than **they** (the Gentiles)? No! ... Because we have proved to both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin”.

The first time Paul mentions the word “strong” is in **15:1**. He **associates** with the “strong”, “Let **us** ...”. “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for good and to edification”. Paul **repeats** ... just **in other words**, what he has said in **14:1**, “him that is weak in the faith receive ye”!

Paul speaks as one of the “strong” “in the **faith**” regardless of **nationality**, regardless of “**food**”, regardless of “**days**”! But he undoubtedly also speaks as one of those “strong” in the faith of “**the fathers**” – the **Jews!** “Christ **also** received **us** (**Jews**) to the glory of God” ... “therefore receive ye one another (Jew and Gentile to the glory of God)” (15:7) as ye “eat” and “regard days” “to the honour of the Lord” (14:6). “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the **circumcision** for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto **the** (Jews)”

fathers, that the **Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy**”, 15:8-9.

Paul says this thing has come true. Just look at them as they regard days and eat all things or only vegetables, “**to the honour of the Lord (Jesus Christ) and thank God**”! “I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God ...”, 14:16. Undoubtedly, Paul siding with the “**strong**”, sides with the **Jews**, and the **Jews** as the “**strong**” are to receive the **Gentiles**, and receive them as the “**weak**”! **The reverse of the traditional interpretation!**

Now if that is true – which it is – then the “strong” “regard” “and esteem” “days”; then it is not “weak” or a “beggarly principle” and a “denial of Christ” to “regard” and “esteem” “days”. Then “to the honour of the Lord unto gratitude to God” to “regard” and “esteem” “days” is an act of the “strong” **and** of the “weak in the faith”, who, while being “**weak in the faith**” are “**in the faith**” notwithstanding! Whether as “one” of the “strong” or as “one” of the “weak” is not the deciding factor, **but “to stand with his Lord”**: to be “**in the faith**”!

“**We** then who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves ... For even Christ (the Strongest, the Only Strong) pleased not Himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee (o God) fell on Me ... Now the God of patience and consolation grant you (brethren) **to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus**. (“Who “took our infirmities upon Himself”, Mt.8:17.) That ye may with one mind and one mouth (in worship) glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefor receive ye one another (to the feast tables), as Christ received **even us** to the glory of God.” (15:1-7) Paul lets speak the spirit of Christ loudest ... Do as Christ did one to another! He also found Himself in a “far country” He was “a man of sorrow; He was despised and acquainted with grief”. He never hit out, but turned the other cheek. That is what the issue in the Congregation at Rome was about in the eyes of Paul.

Paul identifies with the strong **and with the weak**: “**We** who are strong” are you, fellow Jews, and I, Paul. But, “**Christ received even us**”, us, the weakest and “greatest of sinners”. If Christ, the Strong, received “even us”, how should we not “receive one another”? Who is not weak? Who can say that he and his kind are strong or the only strong? If then there can be no strong that are not the weak and no weak who cannot be the strong, how could **anyone be judged and despised** because of his “sincere conviction” that **what he does he does “to the honour of the Lord”**?

**8.1.2.1.
The Text**

5:1

We who are strong

One believes that he may eat
all things
Who eats must not despise who
eats not
One esteems one day above
another

Those who are weak

Another who is weak eats
herbs (only)
Who eats not must not judge
who eats
Another esteems every day

4:2

Everyone must in his own heart be sure **while he regards the day that he regards it** to (the honour of) the Lord –
he who eats, (that he) eats to (the honour of) the Lord
thanking God!
For none of us lives to himself and no man dies to himself, for whether we live or die, (in the end) we die (to give account) to the Lord. But we, whether we live or die, belong to the Lord!

If he grieved with thy meat | **thy brother for whom (also) Christ died**

destroy not him with thy meat

Let not then your good be evil spoken of

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

Because he who serves Christ in these things God accepts and men approve

Food does not destroy God's work. Food is pure but is turned evil by men

whose eating is a stumbling block (to his brethren) It (must therefore be) better

(for him who regards the days and its customs) **not to eat** flesh (at all) | and (for him who) drinks wine (on the regarded days) **not to drink** wine (at all)

or (for both parties) to do anything that one's brother is offended by. (The rule, **Rather abstain than offend**, applies to both parties – see 1Cor.8:13.)

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

Whatsoever is not of faith is sin

**8.1.2.2.
A Literal Translation**

What the passage Romans 14:5-6 says about the observance of the Sabbath:

It says,

1. One man indeed esteemeth one day above another day
hos men gar krinei hehmeran par' hehmeran
..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (e.g., only the Passover Sabbath of the eight days of Passover Season)

2. another esteemeth every day
hos de krinei pahsan hehmeran
..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (e.g., keep all of the eight days of Passover Season)

3. Let every man in his own mind be fully persuaded
Hekastos en tohi idiohi noi plehrophoreisthoh

4. while he regarding the day regards (it) to the Lord
ho fronohn tehn hehmeran ... Kyriohi phronei
“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind that while regarding the day, he regards it unto the Lord” and not unto vainglory.

It says not,

1. One man indeed esteemeth the **Sabbath**
..... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7.....

2. another esteemeth **ALL** days alike, **or**, all days like a Sabbath
777777777777777777

3. another esteemeth **NO** day / no days, **or**, no Sabbath
.....

1, **The text says NOT**, Let every man **decide for himself** whether or not to observe a day; Let every man **make peace within his own mind** about the observance or non-observance of days. (What **the text says** is that every man should be fully persuaded **his** regard of the day **is to the Lord's honour**.)

2, **The text says NOT**, He who regards all days irrespective and alike do so to the honour of God. (**It says**, “He who regards **every day (of the “days” “regarded”)**, regards it to the honour of God”.)

3, **The text says nothing about the Sabbath.**

4, **The text says nothing of “he who does not regard the day, to the honour of God does not regard it.”**

5, The text **read continuously** does **not contrast** him “that regards the day” and him “that eats” but **assimilates** the things the one “that regards the day”, does – he **both** “regards the **day**”, **and**, “**eats all things**”!

8.1.2.3.

Tradition Has Had It The Wrong Way Round

The original text does not at the beginning of 14:6 **contain the clause, “he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it”**. The clause is corrupt and was transmitted through the Textus Receptus from a late Byzantine “Koine” manuscript. Most modern translations omit it.

The **popular versions** of this Scripture gave cause to **two corrupt ideas**. **First**, that the “**weak**” were those who “**observed days**” while the “**strong**” were those who did **not** observe days. Second, that to “regard / esteem every day” means to “deem **all days equal**” as of no Christian significance, or, as to devote all days like a Sabbath to the Lord. (See **Appendix, p 328, ‘Manuscripts’**)

8.1.2.4.

The Text Is Not Divided

The **original text** then, does not contain the clause, “he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it”. This addition was inserted into the text whereby the meaning of the **context** is **reversed**. The text **read continuously**, contrasts “*the one who regards the day and who eating eats to (the honour of) the Lord*”, and, “*the one who to (the honour of) the Lord eats not*”. The “**weak**” and the “**strong**” are **directly associated** with **eating** and **drinking** of “**food**” and **through** their observance of “**food**”, are associated with the “regard” of “one day”, or, with “all days”. The “**weak**” - as are the “**strong**” - are **not distinguished** as to whether they “regard” “days” or “one day” or as to whether they “do not regard the day” or “days”. **Without** the addition **no suggestion** exists of **any** “one” person or party that does **not** “regard” or “esteem” “one day” **or** “all the days”. The “**weak**” do not “regard” the “**food**” / “**meat**” of Old Testament Feasts. But **like everybody else**, they “regard” “**days**” whether only the “one” and main day or “all the days” / “every day” of whatever “feast” or occasion.

The last phrase of verse 5 and the first phrase of verse 6 **should not be separated**. *Hekastos en tohi idihi noi plehrophoreisthoh ho phronohn tehn hehmeran kuriuhi phronei* – “Each in his own mind must be convinced fully that while he is serious about the day his intentions honour the Lord”.

With the added clause gone, the text in contextual relation reads that “**he who regarding the day regards it unto the Lord, who eating, eats unto the Lord, gives God the thanks**”. He so behaves as to ultimately let his thankfulness be known to God! His “regarding the day and indeed his eating” is for the single purpose and with the single motive to honour his Lord Jesus with whom he stands! Paul wants to **encourage such** “esteem” of “days”, of “food” or of **whatever service** of servants of

the Lord. Paul’s highest expectations would come true could he “persuade” the Church at Rome **to unite in such worship!** Unfortunately Paul was confronted with parties opposing one another in the most regrettable spirit.

The “**weak**” and the “**strong**” cannot be divided into parties that “**regarded**” “**days**”, and, that did **not** “regard” “days” because **all the Church** “regarded” “days” – and **Paul says as much**. Paul doesn’t categorise the “**weak**” and the “**strong**” as those who “keep the Sabbath” and those who “despise” the Sabbath and make of it a “beggarly principle”. Such labelling and libelling precisely was the Church at Rome’s sin and Paul doesn’t join the Church in its sinning but reprimands it for its sin. There’s no reprimand from Paul for the Church’s “regard” and “esteem” of “days”.

8.1.3.

What the Issue at Rome was Not About

One, It was **not** a matter of ethical distinction between **clean and unclean foods** or of **days of fasting**

Two, It was **not** a matter of conscience over eating the flesh of **idolatrous sacrifices**

Three, It was **not** a matter of eating the flesh of **Old Testament sacrifices**

Four, It was **not** a matter of observing “**days**”

Five, It was **not** a matter of **food**

Six, It was **not** a matter of observing the **Sabbath**

Seven, It was **not** a matter of “*adiaphora*” – “**indifference**”

What was the problem then? It was the **single** problem that Paul **actually denounces, the prevailing fastidious sentiment of judging**.

After having considered several **impossible** interpretations of the “*disturbance*” in the Church at Rome, Charles Hodge (*Romans*) concludes, “*Every thing in the context is consistent with the supposition that Jewish scruples were the source of the difficulty; and as those were by far the most common cause, no other need be here assumed.*”

Through the process of elimination only “*Jewish scruples*” remain as **mechanical** explanation for the problem in the Church at Rome. **But**, “*Jewish scruples*” *per se* were **not** “*the source of the difficulty*” but the **channel**. “*Jewish scruples*” was not the **issue itself**. “*Jewish scruples*” were **relevant** and practically **involved** while things like “*mystic ascetic philosophy*”, “*the peculiar opinions of the Essenes*” and “*Stoic indifference*” were **irrelevant** and strange to the tenor and scope of the topical **section** as well as of the **whole letter**.

8.1.3.1.

Days of Fasting and Unclean Foods

*“Jewish ceremonial ritual made various contacts with the diet of the Jews. There were **days of fasting**, for example. It is easy to see how some Jews who had just accepted Christianity might still feel to honour such days, and hence to refrain from food on those days or to obey other related ceremonial requirements. ... As various commentators bring out, the Jews who were dispersed abroad, as was true of those at Rome, could not be sure that what they bought at the market place was **clean**, according to Jewish standards; even ‘clean’ meat might not be **ceremonially clean**. Hence some Jews might refrain from eating any meat at all.”* (Questions on Doctrine, “Objection 102”, F.D. Nichol. Emphasis CGE)

This assumption makes one correct correlation, that the “**days**” Paul wrote of to the Church at Rome were associated with the “**regard**” certain “**days**” received.

But if these “**days**”, when “*some ... might refrain from eating any meat at all*”, were “**days of fasting**”, then certainly it would not have been a matter of abstaining simply from “**flesh**” as the Roman Catholic Church centuries later corrupted the discipline of fasting. Besides, the phenomenon in the Christian Church at Rome while it for “**some**” was the refraining from eating “**flesh**” it for the same group or party meant to “**drink wine**”, *i.e.*, **not to abstain from wine!** If it was a matter of **fasting** “*according to Jewish standards*” on certain “**days**” and if the **Old Testament** is meant by “*Jewish standards*”, then it is strange that the Old Testament knows **no** special dates or recurring and set “**seasons**” of “**days**” for fasting. Paul also doesn’t say, “**One fasts one day**”, *etc.* The notion that Paul meant fasting in Romans 14 is arbitrary.

If “*commentators*” mean **fasting** on the Sabbath, they are wrong because “*according to Jewish standards*” the Jews **never** fasted on the **Sabbath**, and the **Bible**, enjoins no fasting on the Sabbath.

Paul claimed he never “spoke other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say” (Acts 26:22) and ever “taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers” (Acts 22:3). How, “*according to Jewish standards*” could he not have objected to the contention that “**all things**” **clean and unclean** should be eaten – as “*various commentators*” claim? And how could Paul be so bigoted as to allow “**some**” “**all things**” **clean and unclean** while permitting “**some**” others to **discriminate** between clean and unclean foods? The notion that Paul in Romans 14 spoke out against the distinction between clean and unclean foods is as arbitrary as the notion that he spoke out against or for fasting.

In the 14th chapter of Romans “**food** (and drink)” is discussed, but not “**food**” as **nourishment or staple food** - concerning which the Bible **does** make distinction between “**clean**” and “**unclean**”. In Romans 14 food **customs** or food **ceremonies** are involved in the issue. The principles **behind** the customs and ceremonies are **also** supposed. The “**food** (and drink)” undoubtedly has to do with Jewish uses, in fact with **Old Testament feasts** – feasts of “**foods**” and of eating and drinking ceremoniously and celebrating. The particulars noticeable in Romans 14 in fact allows for one possibility only, the **Feast of Passover Season**.

8.1.3.2.

Flesh of Idolatrous Sacrifices

“In using a comparable passage of Scripture, 1 Corinthians 8 and 9, we discern immediately that Paul is not speaking of the matter of clean and unclean foods, but rather is discussing a problem that was tremendously acute for the early Christians living in Greek cities. This problem arose primarily because pagan priests and others frequently sold in the market place for food, animals that had previously been offered in the temples as sacrifices to the gods. Some Christians maintained that if a believer ate food, even of a clean animal, that had been offered before these heathen gods, it would be the acknowledging the existence of such a god, and having communion with him. Since they could not tell for sure whether meat purchased in the market place had been offered before idols, some of the Christians maintained that they would not eat any meat at all, but to be sure, would eat only vegetables. Other Christians believed that there was no other god except the Lord, and therefore they didn’t care whether animals had been offered before the heathen idols or not. They would eat them anyway. Over such a matter as this the apostle urged the believers not to judge one another or engage in extended acrimonious debates about it, but each was to honor the convictions of the other on this matter concerning which God had not spoken. In the same way the apostle said, verse 5, “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”” (Doctrinal Discussions, Chapter 8, R&H Publishing Association)

The passages “*1 Corinthians 8 and 9*” and “*verse 5*” of Romans 14, are comparable **only in certain respects**. But Paul does **not** speak about the **same** issue in these Scriptures, otherwise he would have **identified** the matter in the Church at **Rome** with the matter in the Church at **Corinth**. To the Corinthians Paul says, “**Now as touching things offered unto idols ...**” (8:1). At **Corinth** the problem was the eating of things **offered unto idols**. At **Corinth** the eating of things offered unto idols “**touched**” not, as at **Rome**, Christians’ “**regard**” for “**days**” (like the eating of things of “*Jewish scruples*”, does).

In Romans Paul says, *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike”*, and thereby acknowledges something **legitimate**. Paul, while he **accepted** the “regard” Christians at Rome paid “days”, **also accepted the fact that Christians associated** the eating of certain “**food**” with the “regard” they paid certain “**days**”. The “flesh” the “weak” won’t eat certainly did not come from **idoltrous sacrifices** – which is totally **another matter** that Paul dealt with elsewhere ... not here! The “flesh” the “weak” won’t eat certainly did not come from **idoltrous sacrifices** because “one”, that is, “some” “ate all” and are blameless, while the other, that is, “some” “eat not”, and are also blameless. At Rome, no **slaughter** and no **blood** are involved. Here, people eat or do not eat “flesh” for the purpose of “meat” - be it the **meals of memorial- and feast-“days”**. The “vegetables” Paul mentions and which the “weak” ate, could very well have been the “herbs” **on the Feast tables whereon was served “flesh” and “vegetables”**.

As at Corinth, Paul at Rome points out unambiguously the **true** problem. The Church may have been “*engaged in*” “*extended acrimonious debates*”, but certainly **not** over the question *if a believer who eat food of an animal that had been offered before heathen gods acknowledge the existence of such a god and commune with him*. According to this chapter, **not at Rome!**

What “*extended acrimonious debates*” then, was the Church at **Rome** “*engaged in*”? Paul asks, “**Why dost thou judge thy brother?** Because he **regards** only one **day**, or, all the **days** “**esteemed**”? Paul asks, “**Why dost thou set at nought thy brother?** Because he **eats** all things, or, because he only **eats** the vegetables regard of the day requires? The true problem superficially revolved around “**foods**” of “**days**” and not foods from **sacrifices** as such **or** from sacrifices to **idols**. The real problem was one of the **heart** and not of the **stomach**.

“The Kingdom of God is **not meat and drink**” says Paul, “but **righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**”. This is the main and comprehensive theme of Romans 14. It reveals what the problem at Rome **in essence** was. Who in **these things, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit – things of the heart – “serves Christ ... while he regards the day**, regards the day **unto the Lord**”. **This is Paul quoted!** He “is accepted of God and approved of men” because he “regards the day **unto the Lord**” in “**righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**”. (14:17-18)

“Because no one of us lives for **himself**, and no man dies to **himself** merely, for, whether we live or die, we live or die with the view to giving account to the **Lord**. And whether we live or die, we live or die for exactly this reason that we might **belong to the Lord and be His**. Christ also for exactly this purpose died and rose and received all power

that He might be Lord and Master of the dead and living.” Christ through his death, resurrection and exaltation became the **only One** qualified to be **Lord and Judge**. No man may usurp Christ’s position or steal his honour. What is it to “regard” “days” and even to “**esteem**” “days”, that is, to consider them important? (What is it to eat meat from sacrifices to idols?) It is **not** idolatry. Compared to eating meat from sacrifices to idols – the issue at Corinth – eating “food” to “regard” “days” – symptom of the problem at Rome – “**is nothing, it’s a triviality**”, 14:1. **In reality** the problem at **Rome** was **more** serious than the one at Corinth with its sacrifices and all. The trouble at Rome **entailed more** than just “regard” of “days” and “eat” of “foods”. The “**days**” and the “**regard**” for “days” were not of “heathen” or “natural” religious observance. It entailed **subtle idolatry**, the idolatry of **pride** and **self-“esteem”**. At Corinth the cautious are prudent. At Rome the implacable are proud.

8.1.3.3.

Old Testament Sacrifices

8.1.3.3.1.

Sacrifices for Sin

Commentators who identify the “food” of which Paul speaks in Romans 14 with “Jewish” or Old Testament “Feasts” and “Ceremonies” suppose that by “food” and “meat” Paul meant the “**flesh**” derived from the Jewish or Old Testament **sacrificial** system. They agree that the Christians, with the Jews, **kept on** to “regard” these “traditional” “days” for quite some time **into the first century**. Some of the commentators say that the **Christians - like the Jews - “observed”** both the “**days**” and the “**meat**” for the same **purpose** and with the same **importance attached**. That purpose and importance was **sacrifice for sin**. Now **nowhere** in the New Testament and **definitely not** in Romans 14, exists reason for these commentators to so conclude. The New Testament allows continuance with **sacrifices** of **any** kind in no **way** and for no **moment**. No word or notion in the New Testament will be found that Christians in any one case attended the “days” of Old Testament Feasts or used “food” or “flesh” **for the principle of the shedding of blood and taking of life for atonement of sin**. There is the world’s difference between eating an animal’s flesh for **food or feasting** and killing it for **sacrifice!** The thing that would be to the greatest **dishonour** of the Lord Jesus Christ would be to “regard” and “esteem” “days” and “foods” **for the Old Testament principle of the shedding of blood and taking of life for atonement of sin!**

What sort of “days” and “food” / “meat” that Paul could silently and expressly **approve** could **Christians** “regard” and “esteem” with “**honour to the Lord**”? **It could not be** the “regard” and “esteem”

of “days” and “foods” **for the Old Testament principle of the shedding of blood and taking of life for atonement of sin! It could not** because Paul would not have approved and it would not have been to the Lord’s honour. It would have meant a return to Old Testament **principles** and a **denial** of the New Testament **principle** of righteousness – the righteousness by the **faith** of the **sacrifice of Christ for sin - once for all!** The **very first** thing the apostles proclaimed was this absolutely revolutionary and uncompromising fact to be accepted or rejected with finality, **the sacrifice of Jesus for sin and the end of all sacrifice** for sin henceforth. Such a message could not be delivered but by the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit and by the power of Jesus’ **resurrection from the dead – the end of all dying for sin.** It was the Christian Faith, the Kingdom of God, **come.** It was God **with** man, peace **on** earth at last and forever. Nothing, absolutely nothing short of this, immediately and at once. That was Pentecost. No Christian and no Christian at Rome, indulged in sacrifices for sin or devoted days for the purpose of sacrifice for sin! The Church at this stage in its history had not sunk into **such** depths of apostasy or it would have **showed** in its New Testament history. (God the glory, the Church never has sunk into such depths of apostasy ... or did it? What horrible thing “transubstantiation” is!) The Old Testament ceremonial economy of “days” and “meats” **as sacrificial oblation** must be ruled out completely as a possible meaning of the Church’s “regard” and “esteem” of “days” and “food” according to Romans 14.

But **what sort** of “days” and “food” could Christians “regard” and “esteem” **while they so pride themselves of it** that they actually **judge and despise one another? No, it’s not the sort** of “days” and “food” or its “regard” and “esteem”. It is **what frame of mind** that so prides itself of “days” and “food” and the “regard” and “esteem” of it that one actually **judges and despises any who might just superficially differ!**

8.1.3.3.2.

Meat Meet for Feast

Another side of Old Testament and “Jewish” Feasts and ceremonies of “days” and “foods” **survived** the transition of dispensations from Old to New Testament. That side of it had its **nationalistic** aspect without doubt. The **Christian** Church, because it consisted mainly of **Jewish** converts, **inevitably** retained some **nationalistic** character – a character that was determined by the Old Testament “traditions”. Not even Paul, the “apostle to the **Gentiles**”, shod Old Testament or “Jewish” tradition. He, like the Church in general, attended Passover, for example. Paul “**longed**” / “decided determinedly” to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Why at Jerusalem and why

specifically for Pentecost if these things **for its own sake** were of no consequence for Paul? It is nonsense that he attended Old Testament Feasts **only for the sake of opportunity** to reach his kin with the Gospel. (See answered in Part Three.)

The Biblical, “Mosaic”, “**observed**” “days” were **all** associated with the “food” or with the “eating” of meats not only of sacrificed animals but of other “vegetable” offerings. In fact, all **usual** days had their offerings and sacrifices. The offerings and sacrifices of Feast days were just increased. **Other** foods than that of sacrifices and offerings were **also** stipulated for use with specific feast days.

But after Christ for Christians the **slaughter** of the animals for the “feast” occasions was no longer regarded a **sacrifice** or an offering with any propitiating or expiating meaning or value. If served on **Christian feast tables** the killing was not sacrificing but a domestic slaughter for the traditional occasion. It was no blood-offering and the meat was for **feast** and not for **sacrifice in any form.**

Some Christians (being Jews more probably) had no scruples and ate “**everything**” (verse 2) put on the Congregational table on such feast days, for example **unleavened bread** – which was not as much an offering as it was the staple **food** = “**meat**” for the Season of Passover (“Easter”). See the story of the exodus. Many Christians did not think that they jeopardised their Christian confession by their **festive** festal observances. Others though, would “**not eat**” imagining they might deny their Christian faith if they ate **like** the Jews. (Peter would not even eat **with** the heathen brethren, which shows the prevalent **prejudice.**)

Some of the feast days – as in the case of the most important of all Jewish Feasts, the **Passover** – were associated with the **abstaining** from **wine.** Some Christians would think nothing of this rule. They might even **purposely** have used wine on “**every**” as on all Days of Unleavened Bread - as they would keep on using ordinary bread. It is inconceivable that friction would not result between the progressive and conservative nationalistic sectors within the Church.

It simply is a fact that the Christian Church as a whole – not only locally but universally – still “regarded” the “days” of Old Testament “tradition” and still “ate” the “foods” “regard” of the “days” “esteemed” required. Exactly herein lies the solution to the problem under consideration. **The very unscrupulous eating of “everything” of some Christians and the very unscrupulous not eating flesh is surest proof that the Church did not sacrifice to make propitiation or expiation for sin.** The **Christians’** was not the Old Testament “**observance**” for the sake of the **Old Testament purpose and meaning** - for the **principle of the shedding of blood for atonement of sin and taking of life for forgiveness and justification! Christians** – Jewish as well as Gentile

converts – “**respected**” these Feasts and the “days” and “foods” connected with it only **traditionally**. They slaughtered an animal **for food and feast**, yes, but they slaughtered **no sacrifices** and they slaughtered not at all for recompense of sin. They poured no blood on altars. They burned no offerings either animal or herbal. They prepared the traditional meals or food of flesh as well as of trimmings (“vegetables”), and, wine. They formally congregated for the purpose of the enjoyment of these feasts – an enjoyment “in the Holy Spirit”. They celebrated privately (in Church – whether home, Synagogue or Temple) **with no connection** with the ‘centralised’ Jewish sacrificial system. They prayed (“said thanks”) to God over the food – all **“to the honour of the Lord” Jesus!**

But then at this stage in the Church at Rome manifested itself a spirit of gravest sin. Particulars invaded the realm of basics. And the **reason and cause** was a lack of Christian **love**. Christians “**despised**” one another and “**judged**” one another. Paul denounces this, but nothing but **this sin** in the Church of Christ - **not “trivialities”** (14:2) like “one day”, “every day”, “all foods”, “only vegetables” (trimmings), “wine”, no wine, but **sins ... “worthy of death”!**

8.1.3.4.1. “Days”

The problem at Rome addressed by Paul suggests no demographic, no politically social, and no nationalistic social issue. The matter was not between a minority and majority in the Church; it was not an issue of Gentile Christian versus Jewish Christian. It also was no private or domestic problem.

It was an **endemic Christian** issue, and that a specific Christian issue of **worship**. It affected the **Church** and **relations** within the **Church**. It was a specific issue of **congregational, communal** worship. **When the Church assembles** for worship, “one *brother* eats everything while another *brother* only eats what is vegetarian”. **When** on certain “days” the **Church, assembles for worship**, this issue of **discriminating eating** crops up.

Had everybody **not actually** come together on the “days”, the question: What to eat or not to eat **on the “days”**, would never have surfaced! **Nevertheless** the relevancy and Paul’s mention of the “days” is **incidental**. Had no issue on the matter: **what to eat or not to eat** on these “days”, arisen, Paul would **not** have mentioned “days” **at all!** At **Rome**, what met the eye was the **eating or not eating** of “food” (served for and connected with “regarded” “days”) as also at **Colossus** in the **Church** there. At **Corinth** “food” also caused trouble, but a **domestic, every day**-problem. At **Rome because of** the issue about “food”, the “days” became relevant to the issue because it was a **congregational**

problem. But the “days”, **as such**, had not been the problem! “Days” were **incidental**.

“One man esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike”, says Paul. The “**regard**” of “days” was not even the **superficial** issue! “The one **regarded** the one day”. “The other **regarded** every day ... *like the one*”. **Everybody “regarded”** “days” whether only by the main day or by all the days of the supposed feast period. But “**regarded**” the “days” **they did!**

He who regards **every** day but does not regard “every day” **alike**, can only regard “every day” (*pasan hehmeran*) if “every day” belongs to a specific “time” or “season” of **several** (special) “days”. “He therefore who unto the Lord’s honour regards **every day alike** ... regards every day” **even while** he regards **every day above any normal days**. PAUL SUPPOSES NOBODY WHO DOES NOT REGARD DAYS.

8.1.3.4.2.

The Addition and “Days”

Verse 5 to 6 without a hitch, may read, “The first person (or party) may esteem one day above other days, the second person (or party) may reckon every day alike. Let each (whether he regards just one day or every and all the days of the feasts) be fully convinced that he regards the day (or days) to the Lord’s honour. The one, when he eats (**according** to the customs of the “day / days” he “regards”), let him be convinced that he eats to the Lord’s honour and thank God for it. The other, let him be convinced that when he refrains from eating (**against** the customs of the “day” he “regards”), refrains to the Lord’s honour and thank God.”

An addition turns everything upside down. “**The person who does not regard the day, to the honour of the Lord does not regard the day**” – *kai ho meh phronohn tehn hehmeran kuriohi ou phronei*.

Without the addition

1, there is **no** conflicting interests over the “**regarding**” of “days” but only over the “**meats**” pertaining to the observance of the “days”!

2, “**regarders**” of “one day above other days” “**eat all things**” in accordance with the observance of “days” and therefore it is the **regarders of days** who are the “**strong**”.

Insert the addition, and the passage reads,

“The **first** person (or party) may esteem one day above other days, the **second** person (or party) may reckon every day alike. Let each of them be fully convinced. The **first** person who regards the day, regards the day to the Lord’s honour. But **the person who does not regard the day, to the honour of the Lord does not regard the day while he eats** (all things) to the Lord’s honour and gives God the thanks. **He**, however, who **refrains from eating all things** (and only eats vegetables – the “weak”), to the Lord’s honour eats not and gives God the thanks.”

With the addition

1, non-“regarders” of “days” “eat all things” in opposition to the observance of “days” and therefore

2, it is the non-“regarders” who are the “strong”.

The addition contradicts the **basic supposition** of Paul’s argument, namely that **tolerance** and a Christ-like **attitude** should prevail for believers who positively “**regard the day**” “**to the Lord**”. The conflict concerned matters **exactly based on everybody’s observance** of the “days”! Their differences revolved around the observance of these days, namely the differences with respect to the “meats” and the “eating” of the “meats” that belonged to these days’ observance. **Without the reality** in the Church of the “esteem” there was for “days”, there would have been no **manifestation** of the basic problem ... through **foods!** The **basic problem of malice** would have manifested itself **notwithstanding and in any other way** had no “days” been “regarded” and were no “meats” associated with the “days”. An **actual** conflict over observance and non-observance of “days” though was non-existent.

8.1.3.4.3.1.

The Sabbath

The Sabbath or its keeping had nothing to do with the issue in the Church at Rome no matter how the problem is explained. The issue in the Church at Rome had so much to do with the keeping of the Sabbath that **not even a suggestion** as to the Sabbath exists.

With the phrase, “regard / esteem of a day / days” Paul does not mean the observance of the Sabbath. The practices that Paul **denounces**, he as clearly **identifies**. He wants his readers to **recognise** their **sins**; he wishes not to confuse or to play with words. Had Sabbath-keeping been **the**, or **one**, of the undesired and **denounced** practices, Paul would simply have said, “**Sabbath-keeping**”, as clearly as he does say what the **real** evils that he actually denounces, were. But **nothing** of the sort concerning the Sabbath - or even concerning the “days” which he does mention - can be found there. Paul’s practical proposal as a possible solution to the deeper problem at Rome was simple and straightforward, “Don’t eat flesh! Don’t drink wine if thereby your brother might be offended”! It would have been just as simple, just as straightforward if the Sabbath had been the problem or just an aspect of the problem, to say, “Don’t **keep the Sabbath** if thereby thy brother might be offended”.

The **real** problems that Paul **by definition** addresses are problems of **relationship** and **attitudes** and **not** of **observances** and **institutions** – which makes them **intrinsically** and **essentially** problems of **Law** – of **morals**, morals addressed by the “*Mosaic Law*” of Ten Commandments.

If “observes one day **above another day**” (*krinei hehmeran par’ hehmeran*) meant the specific day **because “observed”**, were the

Sabbath, then, by the same principle, to “observe **every day**” (*krinei pasan hehmeran*) must mean that “**all days alike**”, **because “observed”**, were observed **Sabbaths**.

It is fanciful to suppose that “all days (are) **alike**” because “alike” means they all are **Sabbath Days**. “A day” as the **sort** of “day” of which “some regard one day more important than the rest and others regard all equally important” makes **nonsense**. If *pahsan hehmeran* does **not** mean “every day” of **limited festive seasons**, then it **must** indicate **all days without distinction**.

Paul uses the term *hehmera* – “**day**” in Romans 14. *Hehmera* is the Greek word for **any** day of any period of days. Paul does not say **which** “day” or “days” are involved. **Five** things indicate of what **nature** these “days” were. **1, Negatively:** Paul does **not** say “**Sabbath**” in any manner. The fact that he does not say “**Sabbath**” rules out the possibility that he **meant** the Sabbath. The Sabbath, in any case, is “put apart from all ‘days’”, that is, is “**holy**”. **2,** The fact that Paul in no way **opposes** or **denounces** the Church’s “regard” and “esteem” of the “days”. **3, Positively:** The fact that the issue concerns the **Christian Church** and its **congregational worship** and **personal interrelationships**. **4,** the fact that Paul refers to **Christians’** “regard” and “esteem” of these “days”. And **5,** the fact that the Church “regarded” the “days” “**to the honour of the Lord (Jesus)**”. The “days” were of a **kind**, “some observe **every day** of *the kind*; another observe **one** above the other *of these days supposed*”.

Paul knew the name “Sabbath”. Seeing the **judging and intolerant atmosphere** in the Church at Rome the fact that Paul uses the word “day” and not “Sabbath” to make clear what he is talking about, it is clear that he did not **mean** the Sabbath. Suppose that in Acts 13:43 the Gentiles requested Paul “that these words might be preached to them the next “**day**”. Would they have gathered on the next **Sabbath**? No, they would have met the **First** Day of the week! So they asked “that these words might be preached to them the next **Sabbath**”, and Paul and everybody else returned to the same place of Church-assembly the next **Sabbath Day!** Then how would the word “day” mean the Sabbath in Romans 14:5? Many similar examples could be given to show that Paul would **write** “Sabbath” and not “day” if he had the Sabbath in mind – as in fact in each and every instance of its use in the New Testament the Sabbath is called.

In the New Testament only the following descriptions for the Seventh Day Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, are found,

1. “**Sabbath**” – in Greek in the singular or plural, *sabbaton*, *sabbatohn*. The plural is used only in the genitive as a plural or as a singular.

2. “**The Day of the Sabbath**” – *hehmera tohn sabbatohn*.

3. “**The Seventh Day**” – *hebdomos / hehmera heh hebdomeh*.
4. “**Rest**” – *katapausis*, Hb.4:5
5. “**A keeping of the Sabbath**” – *sabbatismos*, Hb.4:9
6. “**The Lord’s Day**” – *hehmera kyriakeh*, Rv.1:10

The **New Testament** and the **Old Testament** do **not** know the word “**day**” – *hehmera, per se*, for the Sabbath.

‘Liberal’ **tradition** regards the person or group of persons who “keep the day” as to keep the **Sabbath**, and as narrow-minded and “Judaistic”. ‘Liberal’ **tradition** regards keeping of **the Sabbath** as a “beggarly principle” and a “yoke of bondage”. What liberal enthusiasm then, “*keeps all days as a Sabbath*”? “*Every day for the Christian must be like a Sabbath*”, they say, and increase the weight of bondage they themselves argue for, seven times. **They** stack “law upon law” (Isaiah), and **theirs** is nothing but the “tradition of men”. This very ‘liberal’ judgement of the issue explains the spirit that Paul wrote **against**; it does not explain the **days** Paul wrote **about**.

While the “regard” of “**days**” was **not** the issue the **Sabbath** and its keeping **by no means** came into the picture. That must be why Paul does **not** say the “days” were “**observed**”. He says they were “**regarded**” and “**esteemed**”.

8.1.3.4.3.2.

“**Weak and Beggarly Principle**” Whereas with the addition, and traditionally, the non-observer “eats all things”, he, therefore, is the “strong”. Because it is the Jews who “observe days”, they, therefore, are the “weak”. Because it is the Gentiles who do not “observe days”, they, therefore, are the “strong”. Because it is “weak” and “Jewish” to “observe days”, the observance of the Sabbath (in terms of Galatians 4:9), therefore, is a “weak and beggarly principle”! That is the logic of Sunday-protagonists. Whereas without the addition the observer of the “day” “eats all things”, he, therefore, by the same principle of logic, is the “strong”!

The clause, “*the person who does not regard the day, to the honour of the Lord does not regard the day*” being inadmissible, Paul only allows abstinence from “eating” of “flesh”. He allows no absenteeism from “regarding of every day” or from “regarding of one day above another day”. Paul allows “regard” of “days”, but no disregard. Paul allows and demands respect for Christians’ “esteem of days”, but excuses no persons’ scorn on it. Paul admits and condones the “esteem” of “days” “to the Lord(’s honour)”. Paul does not support despising of the Sabbath or of any Feasts still “esteemed” by the Apostolic Community to the Lord’s honour. He opposes the very spirit of subversion in the Church at Rome that posed a threat to the spirit of brotherly love and tolerance in regard to the observance of “days”.

For exactly to prevent the conclusion that the “strong” “regards days”, copiests for prejudice towards the **Sabbath Day** inserted the clause, “*... and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.*” They inserted the clause despite the fact – **or for the very reason!** – that the Sabbath is irrelevant to Paul’s discussion. And they inserted it despite the fact that the clause **only negates** esteem of **any** day and does not make an **exception** of “the Lord’s Day”, Sunday. The traditional and popular view that those who observed days were the “weak” Christians simply is a delusion cultured in the mired waters of the evolution of Sunday-observance.

This **added** clause in Romans 14:6 **to my mind** is evidence of a **Sunday-veneration** that in early Christianity (not first century Christianity) opposed the “validity of a keeping of the Sabbath for the People of God”. The idea behind its inclusion into the text may have had its beginnings in the second century and times of **Justin** who was the chief propagandist of Sunday-keeping then. (See reference to Justin also under Galatians 4:10.) Even the style of this clause smacks of **Gnosticism**. I have also shown in Part 3 how the name, “Lord’s Day” in Revelation **1:10**, seems to have been so applied as the Christian’s reply to the Lord Emperor’s Day of Sunday.

(Says Oscar Cullmann in *The Christology of the New Testament* SCM Press 1973, p. 228, “*The lordship of Christ must extend over every area of creation. If there were a single area excluded from his lordship, that lordship would not be complete and Christ would no longer be the Kyrios. For that reason the realm of the state also – precisely that realm – must fall under his lordship. Precisely on the basis of the confession **Kyrios Christos as opposed to the confession Kyrios Kaisar, this conviction must necessarily be a central part of faith in Christ as Lord.**” “*A central part of faith in Christ as Lord*” must apply to those **two special** Institutions of the **Christian** Faith, **The Lord’s Supper** and **The Lord’s Day - Kyriakeh Hehmera** – **The Lord Jesus’ Day** as opposed to the lord **Caesar’s Day**.)*

Both texts could reflect the kingdom of the world within which the Kingdom of heaven existed and both texts could reflect the veneration of opposed “days”. I argue for a much **earlier** dating for the emergence of Sunday observance (late **first century**) than Sabbath-protagonists usually take for granted, namely **late second century**. (See on Galatians 4:10, Par. 8.3.3, especially.) **Not** Romans 14:5, but the **redactorial clause** of verse **6**, (besides Rv.1:10 and Gl.4:10) reflects a **first century** observance of Sunday in opposition to the Church’s observance of the Sabbath. A fourth Scripture leaves the impression of some correlation between “the mystery of iniquity (that) doth already work” of which Paul writes to the Thessalonians (2:7), and the “little horn that shall speak words against

the Most High and shall think to change (God's) times and laws", Dan.7:25-26. If that power operated "**already**" in Paul's day and if the Sabbath had to be replaced by Sunday as a way in which that power would tamper with God's "times" and "laws", then that power must **already** have operated in **Paul's own day**. And the influence of Sunday- veneration must have left these unintentional fingerprints on the New Testament.

(The "**Sabbath**" not merely is "one day among others". **God** "**spoke** concerning the **Seventh Day**"! God never "**thus spoke concerning**" the First or any other "day". The "**Sabbath**" is "**the Seventh Day, the Sabbath of the Lord thy God**". The Seventh Day is "**holy**", "devoted" and "separated unto **Yahweh**". He calls The Seventh Day "**My Sabbaths**" and "**My Holy (Day)**". Its "keeping is **still valid**". It is "still valid for **God's People**".

Sabbath **keeping** not merely is "one man's regard" for "a day". The Sabbath for its keeping depends on no **human** "esteem" or "regard". "According to the **Scriptures**" Sabbath-keeping implies **God's own "keeping"** – **keeping Word in Jesus Christ**. The Sabbath as such is not dependent on **man's** doing all the things of **Providence** and **Promise** because the Sabbath depends on **God's** doing all the things **He as Lord of the Sabbath covenanted** to do. "He concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke"! God's Word of Providence and Promise concerned the Sabbath **as the only day thus involved with his Word made flesh**, Jesus Christ. The Sabbath is exempted from all other days by **this** - God's providential **election of it**, for the **prophetic** and **New Testament fulfilment** of his Promises, **as for the resurrection of our Lord from the dead**.

The Sabbath rests. It rests on God's finishing of his own works. Man is simply invited to share the earnings and enjoy the benefits earned not by himself but which **God** earned through Jesus Christ – which God "finished" earning and paid to the last instalment **by raising Christ from the dead**.

The Sabbath's **keeping, as its Day**, is the **gift of God** for to be returned to God and for God. Sabbath keeping is obedient honouring "**unto the Lord**" of "his own **Rest**"-Day – the "**Sabbath-Day**". "Sabbath-keeping" implies man's rest from his own and wearisome **clamour at righteousness**. Man needs **rest in Jesus** – which means that God has acted and will act **first** and that man will act and **shall act by the act of God**.

"Sabbath-keeping" implies more than just **personal** and "*detached*" celebration of "a day" or "days". (No Stoicism, no nationalism, no religion!) "Sabbath-keeping" is **the corporate and involved Christian duty** as "the-Sabbath:-made-for-man". It should be "honoured", "remembered", "kept fast", "held high" and "observed" ...

"according to the **Scriptures**" ... by "the People of God"!

Jesus calls Himself "**Lord of the Sabbath**". The **Church** calls the Sabbath the **Lord's Day**. One day is specifically **distinguished** in the New Testament from all other days **by the Lord** - pertaining **his Lordship** over and of it; and **by the Apostles** - pertaining their **keeping and veneration** of it. It is the **Sabbath Day**. **God** declares the Seventh Day his "**Rest-Day**" - "because **in it** God finished all his works" – **finished** them in **Jesus Christ** "the Word who in the **beginning** was". And **Jesus** being **resurrected "in the Sabbath"**, **He** is "the Amen of the creation of God" – **God's Rest** by reason of which He, **God in Christ**, created the Seventh Day his Sabbath Day. Before and after **man's** freedom comes the freedom of **God**. The Sabbath **was made ...** for man, it being Day of **God** who, **resting, made it ...** for man. Before it is man's Day of Rest the Sabbath is God's Day of Rest.

This being the nature of the Sabbath and its keeping it is obvious that Paul did not have it in mind when speaking of the "days" involved in the Church's problems over members' "judging" and "despising" one another over "food" the "regard" and "esteem" of these required.)

8.1.3.4.4.

The Lord's Day

Says Adam Clarke, Methodist scholar,

"Perhaps the word 'hemera', 'day', is here taken for 'time', 'festival', and such like, in which sense it is frequently used. Reference is here made to the Jewish institutions, and especially their festivals: such as the passover, pentecost, feast of tabernacles, new moons, jubilee, etc. ... The converted Gentile esteemeth every day – considers that all 'time' is the Lord's, and that each day should be devoted to the glory of God; and that those festivals are not binding on him. We (who translated) add here 'alike', and make the text say what I am sure was never intended, viz. That there is no distinction of days, not even of the Sabbath; and that every Christian is at liberty to consider even this day to be holy or not holy, as he happens to be persuaded in his own mind."

From where does Clarke get the idea that "*the converted Gentile esteemeth every day*" but not the converted **Jew**? It is far more logical that the **Jewish** Christian would still "esteem" "*Jewish institutions, and especially their festivals*". But Paul doesn't even say the Jewish Christians are the ones who "*esteem every day*". Paul addresses the **Christian Church** - at Rome (**and** outside Rome). The possibility that the Jewish contingent might have been the majority in the Church at Rome - **as elsewhere** - only confirms that the **Jewish** converts "regarded" "days" – and, and as, "all days", whether one, main day, or, every day of "*Jewish institutions and festivals*" ... "**alike**"! And because the Jews were the majority as well as by nature and descent domineering "party", the

whole Church would have “regarded” “days” like they did. But things didn’t go so smoothly for any one ‘party’ that “regarded” “days” – of **whomever** it may have consisted and regardless of whether or not they formed the **majority**. All ‘parties’ opposed each other and no ‘party’ was the “winner”. To New Testament principle, the Lord rules. But opposition ruled the day - opposition from those who regarded just one day, or every day; and from those who ate, or ate not. The “regarding” parties **within themselves** were divided between those who “ate all things” and those who “only ate vegetables”. And so it is **impossible to tell** what the cultural or national constituency of any ‘party’ was. And so it also becomes impossible to tell of what nationality or nationalities the “**strong**” or the “**weak**” were – whether they were the Gentile Christians or the Jewish Christians. Paul made no attempt at a political analysis of the situation. He discerned matters of **worship** that concerned him as Pastor as well as Teacher. The “**honour of the Lord**” was at stake and that was the main – and only – thing of importance. Paul distinguished between the “**strong**” and the “**weak**” on **one basis only**, the basis of “**the faith**” in Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour of the **undivided** Church. Lord and Saviour is He of “**us**”, the “strong” **and** the “weak”, of **us** who have our differences on things the eye may see and the Church may “esteem” **but the grace of God surpasses**.

“*Every Christian is at liberty to consider even this day (the “Sabbath”, i.e., Sunday) to be holy or not holy, as he happens to be persuaded in his own mind*”, says the above writer.

Paul uses the **imperative** – he doesn’t merely make an observation. He allows nobody and everybody **an own opinion** on the issue. **That exactly is where all the trouble started!** On the contrary, Paul demands that **everybody** must be “fully convinced” to the **advancement of the unity** of the Church and the **overcoming of factions**. Paul **noticed** the Church’s “regard” of and “esteem” for “days” of communal and congregational and devotional importance – even of cultural and traditional importance – and **upon his recognition built his remonstrance for anti-factionalism**. He would have built a straw man to himself make it go up in flames had he now to allow everybody to play judge and to decide for himself either to despise or respect the Sabbath Day.

Clarke is right and he also is not right. *Krinei pasan hehmeran* idiomatically correct **does** mean “to consider all days **alike**”. But that does not make the text say “*that there is no distinction of days, not even of the Sabbath*”. The text **cannot** say **that**, simply because the Sabbath is contextually **irrelevant** and the “days” implied are Jewish **feast-days**. Matthew Henry on the basis of the **assumption** that the **First Day** was universally observed during Apostolic times, is persuaded that “*the*

Lord’s Day” (Sunday) ought to be exempted from the principle that “*all days should be considered equal*”. He cannot argue for his own persuasion from the **Law** because the principle that all days be considered equal relies on the assumption that the “*Mosaic*” Law of Ten Commandments is **abrogated**. He cannot argue from any **logical** basis because there is no logic in his rule to prove the exception. “*Those who knew that all these things* (all religious “days”) **were abolished by Christ’s coming esteemed every day alike. We must consider it with an exception of the Lord’s Day, which all Christians unanimously observed** (in Apostolic times) *... Art thou satisfied that thou mayest eat all meats, and observe all days (except the Lord’s day) alike?*” While reasoning for equality of all days Matthew Henry argues for exception of one day on the basis of one’s own *satisfaction* or “persuasion” and **nothing more**.

(We have shown beyond doubt (Part Three, 1, 2, 3) that the keeping of the First Day is nowhere seen in the Acts of Luke. We have seen that the single instance of the mention in Acts of the First Day implies the Apostolic Church’s proper ‘keeping’ of the (Seventh Day) Sabbath and not of the First Day.)

“*From this passage about the observance of days, Alford unhappily infers that such language could not have been used if the sabbath-law had been in force under the Gospel in any form. Certainly it could not, if the sabbath were merely one of the Jewish festival days: but it will not do to take this for granted merely because it was observed under the Mosaic economy. And certainly if the sabbath was more ancient than Judaism; if, even under Judaism, it was enshrined amongst the eternal sanctities of the Decalogue, uttered, as no other parts of Judaism were, amidst the terrors of Sinai; and if the Lawgiver Himself said of it on earth, ‘The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day – it will be hard to show that the apostle must have meant it to be ranked by his readers amongst those vanished Jewish festival days, which only ‘weakness’ could imagine to be still in force – a weakness which those who had more light ought, out of love, merely to bear with.*”
(*Commentary*, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.)

These scholars, **absolutely taking for granted** that the Sabbath was transferred to the First Day of the week, the Fourth Commandment to the “Lord’s Day” and God’s sanctification of the Seventh Day to Sunday, argue for exactly the same sentiments on the “*Sabbath*” as Matthew Henry. Their argument *in toto* is irrelevant to the subject matter of Romans 14-15.

Paul **excuses** no one for a lack of “*light*”. He **accuses** both “weak” and “strong” of slinging mud and being braggers. He in so many words refers to “the one” as to “the other”. He does not say the one who judges does not despise, or the other despises but does not judge. No, Paul says,

“You”, the one, weak or strong, Jew or Gentile, **and**, “You” the other, weak or strong, Jew or Gentile, are **equally guilty of all offence**. The strong betray the weaknesses of the weak and the weak are just as good at despising the strong. Paul argues for no equality of all days or no status of any day or days, but for the equality of all **men** and the **lack** of status of any one man or men before the judgement seat of **Christ**. To argue for the preference of Sunday and the abnegation of the Sabbath from this Scripture is to miss its point altogether.

8.1.3.4.5.

“Days” “Regarded”

“He observes the **day**” - *krinei hehmeran*. “He observes the one day **above the other day**” - *krinei hehmeran par' hehmeran*. “He observes **every** day (alike)” - *krinei pasan hehmeran*. One out of certain others is the most important “day”. A cyclic recurrence of **this** “day” among **others** within a **greater** cyclic period of “days” is supposed. **One** (high) day of several (seasonal Feast days) is observed **like no other** of these Feast days, **when** (the Feast yearly) **recurs**. Or, **Every** day of several (seasonal Feast days) is “esteemed” **equally** (to custom) **when** (the feast yearly) **recurs**. The “every day” (= “all days”) Paul supposes must be **definite religiously grouped** days.

The New Testament has a word **preferred** to convey the idea to “**observe**”. That word is *tehrehoh*. “This man is not of God because he does not **keep** the Sabbath Day”, Jn.9:16. To ‘*tehrein*’ the Sabbath – “to **observe** the Sabbath”, is the **opposite** of “to **break** the Sabbath” – *luain to sabbaton*, Jn.5:18. In almost every instance of its use in the New Testament the word *tehrehoh*’s meaning is one of devotion, observance, keeping holy. But this word is conspicuously **not** used in Romans 14!

The meaning of the word actually used in Romans 14:5, *krinoh* - in contrast with the word *tehrehoh*’s **specific** meaning - is **broad** and **general**. *Krinoh* can mean to prosecute, to adjudicate, to determine, to compare, to deem, or to judge. **Primarily** it has a **judiciary** use and **not** an ethical or **religious**.

Paul identifies the verb he uses in verse 5, *krinoh* – “to regard”, with the word *phroneoh* in verse 6. *Phroneoh* means “to be observant” / “particular” / “strict”. The person who “regards the day” – *krinei hehmeran* (5), “respects” / “regards” / “esteems” the “day” important – *tehn hehmeran phronei* (6). *Phroneoh*, though, is mostly used for “to be **unanimous**”. For a Christian to “regard” something “seriously” means the thing is approached and accepted “single minded” by the **undivided Church**. “He who, esteems a day, does so unto the Lord (Jesus’ honour)” – *ho phronohn tehn hehmeran Kuriohi phronei* – and thereby acts in **conformity** with the Christian Church. The Church’ unanimous “regard” of the “days” is belied by its faction fighting.

Take into account that Jesus never introduced additional or new “days” for the Church to “regard”, “esteem” or “observe”, and it must be assumed that these “days” “regarded” were Old Testament Feast “days” or Feast-“seasons” as for example the Passover Season that included the Days of Unleavened Bread. “Regard” of this specific “Season” or “days” of “esteem”, without any difficulty fits the situation in the Congregation at Rome where there were so many Jews.

The fact also that the Christian Church up to the **present** day greatly “esteems” the Passover (or “Easter”) festive season should strengthen the feeling that the “days” Paul wrote about and which the Church “regarded”, were the “days” of Passover Season.

A most **practical explanation** for the “esteem” among Christians of the Apostolic era of “one day above / more important than another”, or, for the “regard” among other Christians (even in the same Congregation) of “every day (alike)”, could be found in the observance of the “**Eucharist**”. The Christian “who regards the day / every day regards it unto the Lord and while he eats, **thank** God” - *eucharistei*. The Holy Communion - “**Eucharist**”, for Christians replaced the Passover Feast **Meal**. Some Christians “regarded” only the Day of the **Meal** important. They did not “regard” “all the days” of the Passover Season equally important - as did others of the same fundamental Christian conviction and Assembly. Those who “esteemed” the “**one** day” of the Passover Feast **Meal** might on Passover Feast **Day** have enjoyed the **Lord’s Supper**. A dish of the Feast-animal might be served – like Christmas turkey nowadays is served by Christians. The (unfermented) wine for celebration of Passover might also have been served for the Lord’s Supper. **Others** would “regard” “**all the days**” of Passover Season. They might have eaten Unleavened Bread (“every thing”) for “every day” of Passover Season while abstaining from (fermented) wine and instead might have drunk ordinary unfermented grape juice.

The motivation and reason of Christians – Jewish and Gentile – for incorporating Passover into their **Christian** worship simply was their **Old Testament and Jewish heritage and culture**. (I don’t insist on this association nor see it as an example for Christians to celebrate Passover Meal as the Lord’s Supper. It simply seems likely and practical that the Church during its “Jewish” age would more likely than any other feast or “days” have “regarded” the “days” of Passover and Unleavened Bread.)

8.1.3.5.1.

Food

“For the Kingdom of God is **not meat and drink** but **righteousness, peace and joy** in the **Holy Spirit**. This is the main and comprehensive concept of Romans 14. Who in **these things**,

righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, serves Christ – **who “regards” these things “unto the Lord”** – “is accepted of God and approved of men”. (14:17-18)

A certain brother by meticulously eating all food the regarding of the preferred day requires regards one day above the other relevant days. Another brother by meticulously eating all food the regarding of every relevant day requires, regards all the days equally meticulously.

But then still other conscientious persons – **Jewish and Gentile** – while **they also** “esteemed the **one day**”, or, “**all the days**”, would “**not eat meat**” of “**flesh**” but “**only greens / trimmings** (of the Meal)”, and, would “**use** (normal “fermented”) **wine**”. These Paul in no manner identifies as Jews or as Gentiles despite the conclusion that they acted so scrupulous **precisely to be distinguished from the Jews**. Their Jewish and Gentile brothers in the faith “**who ate all things**” brandished **them** – **also Jewish and Gentile brothers** – “who would not eat **flesh and drank wine**” as the “**weak**”. But they were as strong in judging as were the strong.

This situation created a very fertile soil for conflict. Paul intervenes and says, 14:2, “**It is all the same, really, it’s trifling**” – *diakriseis dialogismohn*, “You (“the strong” 15:1) must also receive the weak” (14:1). “For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ ... therefore let not us judge one another”. Don’t forget the important thing and don’t fall prey to your real weakness: Don’t judge! Don’t despise! Jesus is the Lord of us all!

Difference over whether only one day or all the days alike should be regarded indicates **two parties**. The parties were **not exclusively Jew and Gentile**. They differed **not over the “days”** as such or over whether the “days” should be “**regarded**”. They differed whether “regard” of the days also meant eating like the Old Testament-Tradition prescribed the “food” pertaining to the “days”. How was the “**food**” to be “**observed**” or how was the “**food**” **not to be “observed”** on these Traditional Days? “Days” were **secondary** and **resulted** from the **actual** (but superficial) issue of **eating or not eating**. The dispute concerned not the “**days**” but – **indirectly**, because even the eating as such wasn’t the real problem – the dispute concerned the “**meat**” and “**wine**” that distinguished the “esteemed” or “regarded” “days”. The dispute about “**meat and drink**” presupposes **important** “days”, days the Church “regarded” and “esteemed” “above others”. What actually was “**observed**” ceremoniously - in the true sense of the word “**observe**” - was “**food**”, “food” of “**flesh**”, “food” of “**trimmings**”, and “food” of “**wine**”. The “**foods**” **by being eaten and by being drunk or not** were “observed” and thus “certain days” were “respected” and “distinguished”.

Even the most biased of exegetes acknowledge the fact that **Paul finds no fault** with the Church’s practice to “esteem” or to “regard” “days”. But the **Assembly or Congregation** of the Church implied by the “days” is **marred by judgement and despising one another** over things eaten and drunk on the “days”. Some regard the “days” of Church-worship **by eating and drinking** of wine. Others in just the opposite way regard the “days” **by abstaining** from certain foods and **by not to abstain** from wine that characterises the “regarding” of the “days”. For **those** who do not eat and do drink wine **as for those** who do eat but drink no wine, “**food and drink**” **had become so important** it for them constituted the whole meaning of **God’s Kingdom!** For them it had become the means to pass **judgement**, the way to receive **pardon for sin**, had become the **object** of reverence! (Christian worship had become a form of idolatry!) But, says Paul, “The Kingdom of God is **not** meat and drink but **righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**” And the Kingdom of God being his Church, God saved his Church through Jesus Christ by the righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

While some brothers **ate “all things”**, others “**only ate the vegetable foods**” and abstained from “foods” of “**flesh**”. These, who “ate no flesh”, “**drank wine**” while the “opposition” abstained. It is impossible to tell how this category of “regarders” divided between the party that regarded only one day and the party that regarded all the days. They all displayed the most unchristian spirit of intolerance – their **only common distinction! The acute malaise went deeper than superficial differences**. The superficial differences and disputes were no more than **symptomatic** of the Church’s need of a true Christ-like attitude towards one another. Paul aims at this deeper and spiritual problem: the issue of the Church’s **need of Christian love** – the issue that concerned God’s **moral Law** and not merely religious and traditional - and of less importance, ceremonial - preferences of “food”. **Superficially** the problem concerned **Jewish traditions**, but **Christian relations** that involved principles of **divine Law** – the “**Law of Love**” that allows the brother his freedom in matters of secondary importance – constituted the **fundamental** problem.

8.1.3.5.2.

Passover for the Strong And the Weak

The “**strong**” is the one who **1, “regards one day** above the other days”, who, **2, eats all the foods** but **3, who abstains from wine - exactly as Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread** used to be “regarded” traditionally!

The “**weak**” is he who **1, “regards every day alike”**, who, **2, eats only vegetables and 3, who drinks wine** - as he, being weak in the faith as a Christian, **is able** to “regard” Passover and the Days of Unleavened

Bread!

The **only** group of “regarded” or “esteemed” “**days**” that could possibly fit or accommodate the preferences of **both** the “weak” **and** the “strong”, of both the regard of “days” **and** “foods”, and of both Jewish **and** Gentile Christians, is the **Passover** Feast Season that included the **Days of Unleavened Bread**. The Passover among all feasts or “days” known of Biblical times was traditionally “regarded” **by a meal of “flesh” and unleavened bread**, and of **vegetable** trimmings and of **unfermented** grape juice. The Passover’s were the only possible Feast “days” when Christians could purposely drink wine and not eat flesh in order to distinguish themselves from the Jews. These negative as well as positive implications confirm the supposition that Paul addresses the **Church** that “regarded” and “esteemed” the “**Jewish**” traditional Feasts and “**days**” in its **Christian**, congregational and formal **worship**.

That however is still **no reason** that the Church should **continue** to observe any of the “Jewish” Feasts, not even the Passover, **in its own right**. The **Bible** has provided – or rather, **God in his Providence** has provided - for the **Passover** specifically to be celebrated and indeed to be “observed” and “hallowed” by the **Church**. For the Christian and the Christian Congregation the **Passover** commemoration “still applies” - vigorously and clearer than before the death and resurrection of Jesus - **through the Fourth Commandment**. Since **Jesus Christ** fulfils “**God’s** Passover” He also accomplishes the **People’s** Passover. “**THEREFORE** the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the **Sabbath Day**”, Deuteronomy 5:15. Paul says Christ is “**our**” Passover (Lamb), meaning the Christians’ and not (only) the Jews’. But he certainly has in mind that Christ, **while** He is “the **Lamb of God**” (John), is “for **us Christians**, for Christ’s **Church**”, the “Passover of God”. Christ for our redemption (cf. Ex.12:11) “is Yahweh’s Passover”. “O Lord, till thy **People pass over** which thou hast purchased”, Ex.15:16.

Keeping the **Sabbath** “still valid for the People of God”, the Church keeps the **Passover** as a commemoration “forever” of the redemption God wrought in Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead.

“Some well-meaning, albeit misinformed, Christians today have accused Jewish Christians of ‘Judaizing’ and ‘Galatianism’ because they choose to celebrate Jewish holidays and remember their cultural roots. Nothing is further from reality. The Jewish believer in Jesus finds deeper significance and reinforced faith in seeing God’s commandments and the customs of his people Israel in the new light of salvation in Christ. These things are relevant to our faith, not in opposition to it. We gain no merit with God in observing the festivals; but if we ignore them, we miss the blessings of a deeper appreciation of the heritage that is the cradle of our

faith and subsequent salvation. The apostle Paul dealt with this subject when he wrote by the moving of the Holy Spirit in Romans 14 ...”. (Ceil and Moishe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover*, p. 60)

I disagree with these Jewish Christians, but with two thousand years gone by since Paul’s day, I am still not allowed to judge them or to doubt their sincerity or even the acceptability “unto the Lord” of their devotion. Nevertheless I believe there is a great difference between the *status quo* of today and that of two thousand years ago. The Jews no longer are the majority in the Church. They have had these many years to consider that all these feasts **are celebrated in Jesus Christ** because they all were **fulfilled** by Christ and **in Him**. Moreover it must have become clear in the meantime that nationalism no longer is of importance, for “there is no more Jew nor Gentile but we are all one in Jesus Christ”. Actually it must have become clear after so long time that nationalism as such only breeds conflict and disappointment. The only true nationalism of all times owes its existence to God’s direct rule – the “time of the Jews”. It was unique and now no longer can be reconciled with God’s design. The Theocratic era was the only nationalistic era but is gone and it now is the time of the Kingdom of God and “the times of the Gentiles”. The life we now live we no longer live to the flesh but by the faith of Jesus. The New Testament on strength of Jesus’ fulfilling all prophecy and promise, indeed on strength of Jesus’ accomplishing and confirming of God’s Eternal Covenant of Grace, concludes and thus invites his People out of every people to “a keeping of the Sabbath still valid for Gods People”. Jesus did bring his People rest by having entered into his own rest from his own work. In **celebrating Christ** in faith and the Sabbath in practice the *cradle of our faith* and eternal salvation is *appreciated* and *reinforced* by “a **better** Covenant”. We remember our **greater** beginnings, in fact our very creation and redemption in Christ Jesus. That is why “the Sabbath remains in force”, for indeed as in Christ all these feasts were fulfilled by Christ and in Him, they **providentially** were all fulfilled **on the Sabbath in that Jesus Christ rose from the dead “in the Sabbath”!** **By observing the Lord’s Sabbath Day, “all the days” receive their due “regard” and “esteem”.** Whether Jew or Gentile Christians as sixty years after Christ so two thousand years after Christ live near the cradle of their faith (as if a thousand years were one day). They live near the cradle of their faith **because they live by the faith of Jesus Christ** Crucified and Risen, Exalted at the right hand of the power of God in heavenly realms, King, Prophet and Priest of the Kingdom of God. Christians “regard” all days and all foods “unto the Lord”. But while they “eat all meat” “unto the Lord”, the Christian nation **observes** the **Lord’s Supper** especially, “unto the Lord”; and while they “esteem all days unto the Lord”, the Christian nation **observes** the **Lord’s**

Day especially, “unto the Lord”. For the life of the Church is a life of **Worship** “unto the Lord”.

8.1.4.

An Attempt at an Accommodating Approach That Failed

Refer, Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *the Sabbath in the New Testament*, Biblical Perspectives, 1990 – used **without** permission, my fear for the consequences notwithstanding, trusting Prof. Bacchiocchi’s forgiving character.

“The Sabbath is not specifically mentioned in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans. However, in chapter 14, the Apostle distinguishes between two types of believers: the “strong” who believed “he may eat anything” and the “weak” who ate only “vegetables” and drank no wine (Rom 14:2,21). The difference extended also to the observance of days, though it is not clear which of the two esteemed “one day as better than another” and which esteemed “all days alike” (Rom 14:5).”

“... the “weak” who ate only “vegetables” and drank no wine (Rom 14:2,21).” The association which Paul supposes, Bacchiocchi reverses. The “weak”, while he / they *“ate only “vegetables”* and no “meat”, did drink wine. Paul addresses the whole Congregation and both opposing *“types of believers”*. His single proposition should satisfy both. *“(For you who eat flesh) it is better not to eat flesh, and (for you who drink wine) it is better not to drink wine, nor for both of you to do anything whereby your brother may stumble or may be offended, or may be weakened in the faith”, 14:21.*

“The difference extended also to the observance of days, though it is not clear which of the two esteemed “one day as better than another” and which esteemed “all days alike” (Rom 14:5).”

There is no indication whatsoever that *“the difference extended also to the observance of days”* but for the **false addition**, “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it”. All “parties” and *“types of believers”* “esteemed” and “regarded” “days”. The *“types of believers”* only differed as to whether **“every day”** of “(all the) “days” “esteemed” and “regarded” should be “esteemed” and “regarded”, **“alike”**, or as to whether **“(one) day (only) above the other”** of “(all the) “days” “esteemed” and “regarded”.

“Many (commentators?) have maintained that the weekly Sabbath comes within the scope of this distinction respecting days. They presume that the “weak” believers esteemed the Sabbath better than other days while “the strong” treated the Sabbath like the rest of the week-days. ...Can the Sabbath be legitimately read into this passage? In my view this is impossible for at least three reasons. First, the conflict between the “weak” and the “strong” over diet and days can hardly be traced back to Mosaic law, because nowhere does the Mosaic law prescribe strict

vegetarianism, total abstinence from wine, or a preference over days presumably for fasting.”

Bacchiocchi is quite correct generally speaking. But as has just been explained above, *“Mosaic law”* fits the context like a glove while **nothing else** does. The “days” as well as the “food” resembles **Jewish** feasts and **particularly**, the Passover Feast-period when certain specific foods and days and times used to be of **special and different** meaning and importance. And although wine as such did not **originally** make out part of *“Mosaic law”* in this respect, it **traditionally** became one of the most important aspects of the Passover that **fermented** wine (like **leavened** bread), was **not** drunk during the “Days of Unleavened Bread” of *“Mosaic law”*. Some Christians – **who then somehow still “regarded” and “esteemed” the “days” of Passover**, went to the **extreme** of *“strict vegetarianism”* and **acted against** what Jewish tradition *“prescribed”* pertaining the use of **wine**. **They**, are referred to as the “weak”. The “strong” Christians **who also then somehow still “regarded” and “esteemed” the “days” of Passover**, went to the other **extreme** and **“ate everything”** that *“Mosaic law”* as well as **Jewish tradition** *“prescribed”* – they also **abstained** from wine!

The Passover, moreover, had its “Sabbaths”:- **1**, The **second** day of Passover **Season** which also is the first of the (seven) Days of Unleavened Bread, “regarded” an “High Day” and called “the Sabbath” of the Passover in Lv23:11; **2**, the **third** day of Passover Season, the Day of First Sheaf Wave Offering, **not called a Sabbath**, but which – by its Providential nature in the last Passover in the life of our Lord – fell on the **weekly Sabbath**; **3**, the **eighth** day of the Feast Season and seventh day unleavened bread is eaten; **4**, the Fiftieth Day or “Pentecost” – 52nd day of Passover **Season**, which necessarily by its Providential nature in the last Passover in the life of our Lord would fall on the Sabbath.

Since Jesus fulfilled each and all of these “days” they by Christians should be “regarded” as such, and as such - **being fulfilled by Jesus and in Him** – be “esteemed”, appreciated and appropriated by Christians. Which **exactly and fully explains** leaving no shadow of a doubt **Paul’s attitude** toward the issue pertaining “days” in the Church in Rome. And since Jesus’ fulfilment of each and all of **these “days”**, “according to the Scriptures”, so minutely fulfils and confirms that **different** day the Sabbath Day for what it in God’s design was, would become and now is, Christians should “celebrate” and “keep” it “holy”.

“The conflict between the “weak” and the “strong” over diet and days” must indeed “be traced back to Mosaic law”. But **certainly not**, except for inference such as I have made above, *“can the Sabbath be legitimately read into this passage”* - in which happy respect my view fully agrees with Prof. Bacchiocchi’s.

“That the Mosaic law is not at stake in Romans 14 is also indicated by the term “koinos – common” which is used in v. 14 to designate “unclean” food. This term is radically different from the word “akathartos” – “impure” used in Leviticus 11 (Septuagint) to designate unlawful foods.”

As has been explained above (Par. 8.2.1.3.1.) the Romans 14 issue is not over “clean” and “unclean” foods. Ro.14:14 plainly states that “nothing” – *ouden*, is *koinon*, i.e., “common”, “*per se*” – *di’ heautou*. It implies precisely what would fit the circumstance of Passover Season during the early years of Christianity. Paul argues that any food that otherwise used as “common” food, would **just as it is** do for the special “regarded and “esteemed” “days”. But as ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’, Paul argues that “to him that esteemeth anything to be ordinary, to him it is ordinary”. **He is free to eat whatever he likes on any day**. Remember that Paul realised that Passover was an institution of the Old Testament times and of a bygone dispensation **despite** the fact that it was in a certain way still observed by the early Church. One may see this remark of Paul as a **preparatory suggestion** for his practical proposal a little further on in verse 21, **that the best thing would be for any party to surrender his own preferences for the sake of the other**. With this remark Paul removes any doubt that the “days” he discusses were specifically **associated with the food eaten thereon**, and were therefore **not the Sabbath** which is distinguished **independent of foods**.

“This term (“koinos – common”) is radically different from the word “akathartos – impure” used in Leviticus 11 (Septuagint) to designate unlawful foods.” But Bacchiocchi’s “unlawful foods” are nothing but “unclean” food”.

This term “koinos – common” is radically different from the word “akathartos – impure” used in Leviticus 11 for the simple reason that it indicates a *radically different* meaning, namely “to designate”, “ordinary” food.

“Apparently the dispute was over meat which per se was lawful to eat but because of its association with idol worship (cf. 1 Cor 8:1-13) was regarded by some as “koinos – common”, that is, unfit for human consumption.”

Nothing is “*apparent*” in this. Idol worship and the foods associated with it is not a matter in Romans 14. (See above Par. 8.2.1.3.2.) And the “food” “eaten” or not “eaten” obtained its meaning not from strange uses and abuses, but from familiar “**common**” **custom** = the “regard” and “esteem” certain “**days**” enjoyed - **among Christians!** Due to the Christian’s internal preferences and dislikes occasion arose for the judging and despising of one another. If idol worship were relevant it was the **idol of self**. Besides, it is impossible that the issue in the

Congregation in Rome could have raged over mutually **exclusive influences** and causes such as Old Testament sacrifices, distinction between clean and unclean foods, and idolatrous left-overs. The issue was not syncretism but factionalism. The Church was not (as at Colossus) “enticed”, allured, by “philosophy” and “mystery”. It was not the in-thing to be broad-minded, “man”, “of the world”, but to be prudish and unbending.

“The whole discussion in Romans 14 is not about freedom to observe the law versus freedom from its observance, but concerns “unessential” scruples of conscience dictated not by divine precepts but by human conventions and superstitions. Since these differing convictions and practices did not undermine the essence of the Gospel, Paul advises mutual tolerance and respect in this matter”.

How could “*superstitions*” “*not undermine the essence of the Gospel*”? Otherwise Bacchiocchi observation is true in every respect. (Return to “*superstition*” further on.) And because of Paul’s “*advice*” of “*mutual tolerance and respect*” a concept such as “**hypocrisy**” could replace that of “*superstitions*”. But hypocrisy must more than “*superstitions*” “*undermine the essence of the Gospel*”. Paul does not address the differences in the Church over days and foods as the **first and real “difficulty”**, ^(Hodge) but exactly the very serious and inexcusable **sin of pride and intolerance** - sins that “**destroy the work of God**”! Paul’s remonstrance really concerns the “**Kingdom of God**” which “is **not** food and drink”. “**For meat does not destroy the work of God**” but “**evil**”, that “evil as far as that man that **eats with offence** is concerned” (verse 20) **does** destroy God’s work and Kingdom. “**Common**” and without meaning, for no reason distinctive and offensive “**food and drink**”, **through its use** by “that man” (“that man” **you** of the Church in Rome!) make of God’s Kingdom a Kingdom and of God’s Work (which is Christ) a work of “food and drink”. It makes of Christ’s Church a *power and principality* and a “worldly” realm where “**one man lords it over another**” “**who is Christ’s**”! **That**, is Paul’s complaint. The Church should hear this while it judges and condemns brothers who “regard” and “esteem” “days” (even the Sabbath) “unto the Lord and thank God”. “**Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died**”. (Destroy not him with **thy day** for whom Christ died?)

“... Paul applies the basic principle “observe it in honor of the Lord” (14:6) only to the case of the person “who observes the day”. He never says the opposite, namely, “the man who esteems all days alike, esteems them in honor of the Lord”.

Paul’s reasoning supposes **every party’s devout intentions** with its preferences and scruples. ‘What the “one man” does’, Paul reasons, ‘he does with the same motives you have’. “Therefore, who are you to

despise him; who are you to judge him?” – verse 10. **Nevertheless**, the Church comes under Paul’s **uncompromising judgement** for its **hypocrisy** because it is **this** very religious and pious Church that “judges” and “despises” “one another”, that “destroys God’s work” and that makes of God’s Kingdom nothing more or better than “common” “food and drink”!

“In other words, with regard to diet, Paul teaches that one can honor the Lord both by eating and by abstaining (14:6) but with regard to days, he does not even concede that the person who regards all the days alike does so to the Lord. Thus Paul hardly gives his endorsement to those who esteemed all days alike.”

Maybe Bacchiocchi administers overkill. The same answer applies to the same argument just put in other words. Nevertheless other aspects of the matter emerges from Bacchiocchi re-statement. As just shown, Paul implicitly **does give his endorsement to those who esteemed all days alike**. But here one must ask, “*all days*” **in what sense?** Does Paul have in mind “*all days*” **without distinction** as commentators almost without exception allege? Or does he have in mind “*all days*” **of the contextually relevant period or season of days?** Keeping in mind that Paul in fact supposes “days” of “*Mosaic law*”, and most specific and obviously the “days” of the **Passover Season**, it comes as no surprise that he literally does not say “**all days**”, but the **singular**, “**every day**”. “**Every day**” **of what?** is the natural question. “Every day” **of the season**, feast or period implied, is the natural answer. And simply **no other** feast-time **naturally complies** with the oddities implied and mentioned in the passage but the **Passover Feast Season!** Says Paul, “*One man esteems one day above another day; another man esteems every day (pahsan hehmeran)*”. He in fact does not use the express word, “**alike**” which is a meaningful fact that makes the phrase “every day” imply a definite **group of relevant days**. Nevertheless Paul **intends to convey** the idea that some “regard” “every day” **of all these days**, “**alike**”! (See Par. 8.2.1.3.4.3.1; 8.2.1.3.4.4 above.)

“If, as generally presumed, it was the “weak” believer who observed the Sabbath, Paul would classify himself with the “weak” since he observed the Sabbath and other Jewish feasts (Acts 18:4, 19; 17:1, 10, 17; 20:16). Paul, however, views himself as “strong” (“we who are strong” – 15:1); thus, he could hardly have been thinking of Sabbathkeeping when he speaks of the preference over days”.

If Paul as a Sabbath-keeper is “strong”, then “he who regards a day” must be considered the “strong” “*type of believer*”. And as there were **no** persons who did **not** “regard” “days” and as **everybody**, “**regarded**”, “days” – “one man” only “one day”, and “another man”, “every day” – the latter was the “weak” “man” who refused “meat”, did

not “eat everything” but “only vegetables” and did “drink wine”. And **in line with this negative attitude** of his, **he** was the “one who” did **not** “regard **one day**” of the feast period “**above the other**” days of the feast period which he **in fact** “regarded”. Paul *could hardly have been thinking of Sabbath-keeping when he speaks of these several and diverse preferences of “days”*. “Days” and “sabbath days”, **in any case**, were not the issue, not the problem, and not the subject of Paul’s discussion, but **that which constituted the Kingdom of God** for some of the Church at Rome: “**food and drink**”!

“The preference over days in Romans presumably had to do with fast-days rather than feast days, since the context deals with abstinence from meat and wine (Rom 14:2, 6, 21).”

It is difficult to understand how Bacchiocchi could accommodate the full array of the popular explanations for the problem implied in Romans 14. It’s just not possible that *Mosaic law, vegetarianism, clean and unclean food, and fasting* can independently or syncretistic present the answer or just part of the answer to the problematic of the passage.

Fasting cannot in Romans 14 be relevant. Nobody ate nothing. Those who did not eat meat still ate vegetables and still drank wine. Even their eating “only vegetables” does not mean some were vegetarians. Their preferences of eating and drinking applied **only** for the several “days”, that is, for “**every day**” of the period supposed. Afterwards eating returned to “normal” (“common” - *koinos*). Also does the word for “vegetables” not necessarily define **plant-food**. It can also mean “trimmings” or “garnish”, even “**side dish**” of whatever source. Again the Passover meal and the food for the whole Feast traditionally became **lavish** with much more **served** than the original “**flesh**” of the sacrificial lamb “**only**”, or, “**bare**” / “**bitter**”. (See Part One.) Of neither vegetarianism nor fasting is there any question.

“If the conflict in the Roman Church had been over the observance of holy days, the problem would have been even more manifest than the one over diet. After all, eating habits are a private matter, but Sabbath-keeping is a public, religious exercise of the whole community. Any disagreement on the latter would have been not only noticeable but also inflammatory.”

The conflict in the Roman Church – **in fact - had** been over the observance of holy days, not only noticeable but also inflammatory. Very much so. It was so “**inflammatory**” that the “one man” was surrounded with categorised “parties”, the “Strong and the Weak”. It indeed was a matter of political lobbying and emotions and slandering no scarcity. And Paul addresses exactly such a “**conflict**”. These “*eating habits*” were no “*private matter*”, but clearly and obtrusively, irritatingly “*a public, religious exercise of the whole community*”. “**Disagreement**” “**over diet**”

went hand in hand with “*the conflict over the observance of holy days*”. The two aspects were inseparable, and the fact implies that the problem was one of and within the **Church**. It was an issue of **worship**, and it had to do not with “*private*” but with **congregational** worship – which is worship on certain **days** and **periods** of days – **without exception**. Church worship does not exist without its days of worship. That is reality. And it is reality not purely as factual, but because it is **God’s dispensation**. Show me where does a people worship God not on God’s days for to be worshipped on by his People! At Rome the “*conflict*” had **nothing** to do with “*dief*”. And exactly this perspective of the “*conflict*” explains quite satisfactorily “*the fact that Paul devotes 21 verses to the discussion of food and less than two verses (Rom 14:5-6) to that of days*”. The eating problem concerned the out of the ordinary, the against the spirit of the “days” – which were the ordinary, acquainted “days” of traditional and Old Testament origin and standing as “days” of Congregational Christian worship! “*Days (were) a very limited problem for the Roman Church*” is an understatement. The Rome congregation would have had **no** problem **whatsoever** concerning “days” of feast and worship had it not the problem **practically realised by, in and through customs concerning “food and drink” that belonged to those days**. And even if the “*difficulty*” were one over “days” as “days” of worship or feast – it is an eternity from being a difficulty over the **Sabbath Day**! And if anything could be more remote from relevance it would have “*had to do with private conviction on the merit or demerit of doing certain spiritual exercises such as fasting on specific days*”.

We have above taken notice of Prof. Bacchiocchi’s attempting the impossible by trying to explain the problematics of Romans 14 **at the hand of every imaginable whim**. Yet he finds **still another “possible”** explanation for the Rome Church’s “*conflict*”. Says he, “*In the Roman world there was a superstitious belief that certain days were more favourable than others for undertaking some specific projects. The fathers frequently rebuked Christians for adopting such superstitious mentality. It is possible that Paul alludes to this kind of problem, which at his time, however, was still too small to deserve much attention. In the light of the above consideration, we conclude that it is hardly probable that the Sabbath is included in the “days” of Romans 14:5*”. (Emphasis CGE)

“*In the light*” of his disparate stew of “*possible*” impossible “*considerations*” and typical “*conclusions*”, Prof. Bacchiocchi claims “*it is possible that Paul alludes to this kind of problem*”, which “*at (Paul’s) time*” posed itself the problem of the “*superstitious mentality*” and “*superstitious belief*”. Though not “*much*”, it, says Prof. Bacchiocchi, “*deserved*” enough “*attention*” to explain what Paul meant with the

concept of “days” in the “*conflict*” in the Church in Rome. Now that would be worse an association of ideologies and a bleaker marriage of practices in this Scripture than for Paul to have “*alluded*” to the Sabbath in it!

Conclusion

If in our day it is a “*weak and beggarly principle*” to keep the Sabbath but “**strong**” to **venerate Sunday** it is not to say that in Paul’s day it was the case. For Paul the **Jewish Christians** – who were the bearers of the Light of the Gospel before and after Christ **and** who were the keepers of the Sabbath – were the “strong” in the **Christian Faith**. **As Christians**, the **Jews** “advantage” was “great in every respect” (Ro.3:1). (As **unbelieving** Jews, they were a rejected and dismembered nation and individuals.) They – **as Christians** – were children and not strangers to the promises of God. To **them** – **as Christians** – belonged the Covenant and the Promises, belonged the “inheritance of the saints” and **God to them** – **as Christians** – **kept Word** in Jesus Christ! The **Jews** – **as Christians** – were **natural** branches of the olive tree and not grafted in like the heathen (Ro.11:17). Only as a “strong” could Paul the **Jewish Christian** declare, “I seek not my own profit but that of many, that **they** may be saved” (1Cor.10:33). “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye (“strong” Jewish Christians), and not grudgingly! ... For we (Jewish Christians) that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak (Gentile Christians), and ought not to please ourselves” (Ro.14:1, 15:1).”

“*The narrower people*” says William Barclay, “*make a great deal of the observance of one special day. That was a special characteristic of the Jews ... people who made a fetish of observing days ... The Jews had made a tyranny of the sabbath ... It was not that Paul wished to wipe out the Lord’s Day – far from it; but he did fear an attitude which in effect believed that Christianity consisted in observing any particular day.*” (Letter to the Romans)

We have noticed that the **Jews** were not the culprits in the Church at Rome **for being Jews**. The culprits were among them as among the Gentile ... **Christians!** We have noticed that the **Sabbath** is irrelevant to the subject Paul discusses in this Scripture. We have noticed in fact that the matter **had nothing to do** with “*the observance of one special day*” or “*any particular day*”! Contextually anything “*that*” whatever Paul might have “*wished*” about “*the Lord’s Day*” – **Sunday**, is as relevant as is the “*Stoics’ indifference*” Barclay attempts to read into the context of Romans 14.

Paul makes an exception of the Lord’s Day as much as he makes a point in case of the Sabbath. If Paul had argued against the “observance” of “days”, he argued against the observance of **all** days. And if such an argument could possibly have been valid, there would

have been **no** “Lord’s Day” to make an **exception** of, and **no** Sabbath to make an **example** of!

Barclay claims “*that Paul wished (not) to wipe out the Lord’s Day*” (Compare Matthew Henry above) and thereby insinuates *that Paul wished to wipe out the Sabbath!* Paul writes of the “day” and “days” “regarded” and “esteemed” “unto the Lord” – but has the “*wiping out*” of “days” in mind? If Paul were that eagerly “*wiping out*” why does he not **say so** and why does he not show the same determination **to introduce** the Lord’s Day (Sunday)? Should Paul not have **mentioned** the immutability of the Lord’s Day (Sunday) **if he had any** “regard” or “esteem” for it “*the Lord’s Day*”, “unto the Lord”?

Says **Paul**, “**one (of us, our Christian brother)** regards the day”, and “**esteems it unto the Lord**”! Says **Barclay**, “*The narrower people*” make of the day a “*fetish*”, a “*tyranny*”. If that isn’t twisting the Scriptures, what is?

“Avoid foolish questions ... and strife and fights **about the law** – for such things are unprofitable and proud. A **factionalist** (after one or at most two admonitions) avoid – he, knowing that he has been subverted, **sins**, and is **self-condemned**”. (Titus 3:9-10) So serious is it **to divide the People** of God. **That**, was the Church at Rome’s **sin** – **not** it’s **undivided** regard and esteem of days.

“**One of us**” (14:7, 12) “regards” and “esteems” “days” (5-6), says Paul. “He (only) must be **confident** that he **to the Lord’s honour**, devotes his regarding the day”. (6a) Because “none of us lives to himself (7) ... for **we live unto the Lord** ... **We are the Lord’s**”! (8) “Let us then no longer judge one another ... **but judge this**, that no one puts a stumbling block or brings in his brother’s way occasion to fall”. (13) The regard and esteem of days is no sin but is the **undivided Church’s** confident devotion unto the Lord. But woe to him who divides Christ’s Church! To divide Christ’s Church is sin, and a person who divides Christ’s Church has brought himself under the judgement of God. **Me wonder how Sunday was at first introduced into the Church without dividing the Church, without the process ever manifesting itself as this sin?**

Renewed After the Image of Him

The Church has always had to admit the historic fact that the Apostolic Congregation (first century) underwent a transition from its nationalistic and Old Testament character to that of a truly Christian and universal Church. The Church has always admitted the fact very reluctantly, however. It has never given that process and that period due recognition or consideration. And it has never given Paul due credit for being the champion of that transition because that would be too “Jewish”. The Church has always held Paul for the **proselytiser** of the **heathen**

while he actually led the Jewish Church into the universal Church, being its first apologist, teacher and professor of “**the Scriptures**” – **the Old Testament!** See Part 3 / 1.

The Church has never given due recognition to the fact of the Apostolic Congregation’s emancipation not only from its **Jewish past**, but also from **its heathen present**. As the Church of the first century had to gradually become the **full fledged Christian Community**, it simultaneously had to face the vehement onslaught of the “**world**” and its “human wisdom”, “doctrine”, “principles” and “philosophy”. Paul in his Letter to the Colossians sees in this process and progression **the path of Christ’s victory**. The Church undergoes a trial-period, and attains **full marks ... “in Him”!** Paul wrote no Letter more positive than the Letter to the Church in Colossus. The Church features colossal. But the Church so glorious in its quest is not complete yet or otherwise than “**in Christ**”! Any other “**principality or power**” compares insignificant with “the **Body being Christ’s**” – so **even its own** in view of what “**is near and nearing**”. The “principalities and powers” of the “world” are “made a laughing stock”. But the Church as “rule and power” of which “Christ is the Head” is the heraldry of “fullness” ... “in Him”! Its own past as its own present (as in its “eating and drinking”) is **no static sign-post** that is left behind, but as a “shadow” **stays with the Body. Now, being “but a shadow of what is to come”, “the Body is Christ’s”, nevertheless!**

Even the then triumphant Church of transition is **but an indication** – a mere shadow – of Christ’s Church in the “**still coming**” end-time. The Church has **not yet** fully attained, has not as yet reached and arrived at its triumphant goal and destination, **nevertheless now in Christ** and in Him as its **Representative, has** obtained fully, **has** reached that end-mark and stature **God envisaged** and set the standard for in Christ.

The Church has always taught a beginning with the Christian observance of the First Day from “that day the First Day of the week the disciples *assembled*” (Jn.20:19) **as though the process of transition never occurred**. Which in any case was no transition from an observance of the Sabbath to an observance of the First Day. Just so the Church has used Colossians 2:16 to show an alleged **antagonism towards the Sabbath Day within the Christian Community** and to imply the First Day’s alleged pre-eminence over the Sabbath. The **Sabbath’s growth, with, from, in and into** that Body and its Head - which is Jesus Christ - the Church has come to ignore completely.

Addendum

Dear Doctor Bryant-Abraham,

You write (*Restore!* Summer 1999)

on the subject of the so-called *Judenfrage*. I admit, the One General Christian Church has erred concerning the Jews. The Germans were a Christian people who, only by forsaking their Christianity, were able to commit genocide on the Jewish people. But note, exactly through nationalism could they go so far. Any person if called to the Faith in Jesus must and shall “leave father, mother, brother and sister and follow” Jesus. I used to be a staunch nationalist, and only after nationalism had cost me dearly, I came to realise that it is an either or situation. One cannot serve two masters if Christ is the Lord of one’s life. No matter how beautiful, how miraculous, how divine the history of the nation Israel, Israel no longer is the People of God, just as no other nation may claim to be God’s chosen People. There never will be a people “after the flesh” that will be God’s again, for we “no longer know Christ after the flesh” – and “God knows who are his”: “Those who **believe!** **Jesus saves nobody by merit of the fact that He is a Jew. He might save a Jew despite the fact that he is a Jew.** But He saves the elect by merit of the fact that He became God incarnate: “God with us” – **man!** Jesus asks everyone who wants to be his, **to leave his nation.** That is most important and absolutely conditional to be a true Christian, whether Englishman, German or Jew. As long as one protests to this, forget to follow Him.

The Jews should stop to pride themselves of their history. They were a sinful people and in no respect better than other nations. Paul says so plainly, “**There no longer is Jew nor Greek**”, not even, man or women, but Christ is all in all. You are a Christian exclusively to the very painful last ounce of nationalistic blood. The day the Jews will renounce – yes, renounce their nation and nationality, there may be hope that they would become Christians. If the Englishman must do so, and the German, and the Afrikaner, why not the Jews? Because they were better, holier, because theirs used to be a “great advantage in every respect”, because theirs used to be “the covenants and the promises of God”? Let me tell the Jews, God did keep word and did make true every promise and so his one everlasting Covenant of Grace which He covenanted with **them.** God **had done** it all in Jesus Christ.

Now allow me to point out some problems with your interpretations of the Scriptures in your article *All Israel Shall be Saved*. I nowhere can find the Scripture that reads, “*if the first dough be holy, the whole loaf is also holy ...*”. Romans 11:16 reads, “If the **first fruit** be holy the lump (of dough) is also holy”. **Christ** was raised from the dead the First Sheaf of First Fruit of Passover. Fifty days after, the **First Loaves** were waved before the Lord, and Pentecost gave birth to the

Church. “*If Christ being the First Fruit is holy, therefor shall the Church being the First Loaves be holy*”. To make Israel to the flesh stand for the First Fruit and call it the “**first dough**” is to make it both Christ and Christ’s Church.

You continue, “*... and if the root be holy [Israel’s sacred history and destiny], so are the branches [individual Jews].*” Your statement contradicts Paul. He speaks of Christ as the First Fruit. So does he speak of Christ as the Root. “Some of them”, Israel were **branches** just as the heathen were branches. The first difference is the Jews were **natural** branches of the olive tree “**some of them**” “**broken off**” whereas the heathen are “**wild olive**” branches “**some of them**” “**grafted in**” on the same “root”: “Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee”. (18b) “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things”. (36) The second difference is this, that the natural, Jewish branches were “**broken off**”, (17), while the “wild” heathen branches were “grafted in **among** them, and **with** them, partake of the root and the fatness of the olive tree”.

The Gentiles were grafted in among the natural branches **that were left** on the root and trunk of the olive “**tree**”. “I have reserved to myself men ... even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace”, 4-5. Obviously and simply the branches left intact were individual **Jews** who “at this present time” of Paul’s writing were believers in **Jesus Christ**. “Because of **unbelief** they (the unbelieving **Jews**) were broken off, and thou (the grafted in **heathen**) standest by **faith**” (20) ... **in Jesus Christ!**

The wonderful mystery of God’s love can clearly be seen in this, that the Jewish **nation** is not portrayed as the **trunk or root or as a branch**, but as **branches**, so that “**some of them ... might (be) save(d)**” ... who also, like the Gentiles, **according to the election of God**, “**stand by faith**” and are “**spared**” because of “the goodness of God”, “if you (individually) continue”! (20, 22) “And **so** shall all Israel (one by one as each may be found in Christ) be saved”. **No Jew** shall be saved because the **Jewish nation** might be saved. **All** Israel shall be saved because all Israel consists of Jews **and** Gentiles. Verse 26 says this, and from this text on Paul explains **how** all Israel will be saved, “**through the obtaining of grace**” (30) – through obtaining that grace through which God’s grace is believed unto salvation in Christ. “*God’s own olive tree*”, is **not “Israel”**, but the **Church** – “*spiritual Israel*” of which Christ is **Head, Root and Trunk**, and Gentiles, as Jews, are the branches. “Until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in ... then all Israel shall be saved” means just this, that until every individual Gentile that shall be saved had been saved the number of all Israel will not be completed. The numbers that should fill up the outstanding numbers of all Israel consist of Gentiles and Jews not converted yet and not of Jews for being Israelites to the

flesh. **Only** Israelites **become Gentiles** might again be grafted in on their original tree. "For God hath included **them all** (Gentiles and Jews) in **unbelief**, that He might have mercy upon all", and none shall be saved but by the sure mercies of David. **Only** Gentiles of Gentiles and Jews **become Israelites** shall be saved (as the Acts clearly show).

8.2.

Colossians 2:16

8.2.1.1.

The Judge and the Judged

⁹ We cease not to pray
for you
that ye might
be filled in all wisdom
and
spiritual

understanding
with the knowledge of
his will

¹⁰ that ye might walk
worthy of the Lord
to all pleasing, fruitful
in every work,
increasing in the
knowledge of God,

¹¹ strengthened
according to his
glorious power
with all might
unto all patience and

longsuffering
with joyfulness
¹² giving thanks unto the
Father
Who prepared us meet
to be partakers of the
saints'
inheritance in light¹³
Who delivered us

^{2:1} I have great
conflict for you
² that your hearts might
be comforted in love
joined

unto all riches of full
assurance
of understanding
unto knowledge of
mystery

of the God of Christ ³
in Whom
are hidden all treasures
of
true wisdom and
knowledge.

⁴ *This I say lest any
man
should beguile you*

with enticing words.

⁵ For though I be
absent in flesh
yet I am with you in the
spirit

rejoicing and
beholding your order **in**
Christ.
and steadfastness of
your faith

⁶ As ye have therefore
received

Christ Jesus the Lord

*from power of darkness
and*

translated us into the
kingdom
of his dear Son ¹⁴ **in**
Whom

we have redemption

through his blood
even the forgiveness of
sins

¹⁵ Who of invisible God
is the image,
of every creature the
Firstborn,

¹⁶ **For by Him**

all things that are in
heaven,
and in earth visible,
invisible -
whether thrones,
dominions,
principalities, powers :

By Him

all things were created

and **for Him.**

¹⁷ He is before all things
all consist
by Him. ¹⁸ **He is Head**
of the body the Church.

who from the dead

is the Firstborn

and beginning,

that in all ye

so walk ye **in Him**

⁷ rooted and built up

in Him

and established in the
faith

as ye (**in Him**)

have been taught

abounding in
thanksgiving.

⁸ *Beware lest any man
spoil you
through philosophy,
vain deceit
after the tradition of
men
after principles of
world,
not after Christ.*

⁹ **For in Him**

dwelleth fulness of
Godhead bodily.

¹⁰ **In Him who is the
Head**

of all rule and power
ye are complete

¹¹ - **in Whom**

ye are circ. w. circ.
without hands
putting off body of sins
of flesh

by the circumcision of
Christ.

¹² **Buried with Him in
baptism**

wherein also ye are
raised

He might have
pre-eminence.
¹⁹ **For it pleased the Father**
 that all fulness shall dwell
in Him
²⁰ **and having made peace**
through the blood of his cross to reconcile all things
to Himself by Him
²¹ *and you alienated, enemies*
in mind through wicked works
now has He reconciled
²² **in the body of his flesh through death**
 to present you
 holy unblameable, unproveable
 in His sight.
²³ If ye **continue** in the faith
 grounded and settled
THEN DON'T YOU
(by philosophy)
BE MOVED AWAY
 from the hope
 whereof I Paul am a minister
 ye heard, which was preached -
- the hope of the Gospel!
to every creature

through faith the work of God
of raising Him from the dead.
¹³ **You indeed being dead**
 in y. sins and uncirc. of y. flesh
with Him
Quickened He together
having forgiven you all trespasses
¹⁴ **blotting out**
the against us, contrary to us
handwriting of ordinances
nailing it to his cross.
Having spoiled
principalities / rule and power
He made a show of them
openly
triumphing
over them in it
¹⁶ **THEREFORE**
DON'T YOU LET
ANY MAN
JUDGE YOU
 in meat or in drink or in meat or in drink of feasts
 or of months or of sabbaths
¹⁷ **which thing is a shadow**
of what is coming :

under heaven
²⁴ I, Paul, who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and in my flesh that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ fill up **for his body the Church's sake,**
²⁵ whereof I am made servant
 for the stewardship given me
of God for your sake to fulfil the Word of God -
²⁶ the mystery hidden from ages and from peoples
but now manifested in his saints

this, the body of Christ!
¹⁸ Don't you by *anyone* be *beguiled of your reward*
lusting in humility and angelic worship - things
he vainly sees intruded upon
and fleshly minded
gets puffed up over
¹⁹ *not holding to*
the Head from Whom all the body by joints and bands
 is administered
 nourishment
 and being joined together grows
into the grown body of God.

to whom God would make known
 The riches of glory of the mystery among the Gentiles
 -
Christ the hope of glory living in you
²⁸ **Whom we preach**
 warning, teaching
 every man in all wisdom
 that we may present

Wherefor if ye be dead w. Christ
from principles,
of the world
why, as though living
in the world
are ye subject to ordinances
²¹ *touch, taste, treat not*
²² *all which are to perish with use -*

^{3:1} **If then ye be risen w. Christ**
 Seek those things
 above
Where Christ dwells on the right hand of God
 Set y. affection on things above
 not on things on earth
³ For ye are dead
 -your life hid

**Every man
perfect - in Christ**

²⁹ toward which

also I strive

**According to the
working of Him**

working

in me

with power!

*doctrines and
theories*

according to man

²³ *which things all*

*having a repute of
wisdom,*

*in self-
chastisement*

*and neglect of the
body*

*is to no one's
honour*

*but to satisfying of
the flesh.*

^{3:8} But now you put off all these

⁹ You have put off the old man
with his deeds

¹⁰ and have put on the new man -
renewed in full knowledge
after the image of Him
who created him -

¹¹ where neither Greek nor Jew
but Christ,
is all and in all.

¹² Put on therefore as God's elect, holy and beloved,
bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,
longsuffering

¹³ Forbearing one another and forgiving one another
If any man have a quarrel against any -
even as Christ forgave you, so forgive ye

¹⁴ And above all these things put on charity which is the bond of
perfectness

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts
To the which also ye are called in one body;
and be thankful

**with Christ in
God.**

⁴ when Christ our
life

shall appear in
glory

**then ye with
Him!**

⁵⁻⁶ Mortify y.
members on the
earth ... through
which things

**the wrath of
God is coming**

*on children of
disobedience
among whom you*

also walked

*then when you
still*

*lived in these
things*

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and
spiritual songs,

singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord

¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed,
do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus

Giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

8.2.1.2.

What Colossians is All About

*“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,
and ye are complete in Him ...*

in whom also ye are circumcised ...

buried with Him in baptism ...

ye are risen with Him ...

you hath he quickened together with Him ...

by having forgiven you all tresspasses ...

by having spoiled principalities and powers ...

by triumphing over them ...

This is the **introduction** to and **summary** of the passage,
Colossians chapter 2 **verses 16 to 17**, On strength of this introduction to
his admonition, Paul **jubilantly concludes**, **“Therefore, let no man judge
you in meat or drink ... the body is Christ's ... which is the Church” ...**

1:24! Paul does not beg for pity on behalf of the Church nor makes
excuses for the Church's freedom in Christ. No man should touch the
creation of God's Spirit (1:16) of which **Christ the Victor** is the
Firstborn and the Beginning (1:17). **“Your life is hid with Christ in
God”, 3:3!** **“Let no man beguile you of your reward!”**, **2:18. That is
what Paul's Letter to the Colossians is about!** The **rumour** as well as,
we believe **real meaning**, of the text, **2:16**, **“Let no man judge you ...”**, will
be considered here in the context and in the light of this total context.

The **before-going** verses, **1 to 15**, and the **following** and
explanatory verses, **17 to 23**, as indeed the **whole** of three chapters at
least, must be carefully read and **constantly be kept in mind** or else
understanding of its true meaning will not be obtained. Actually, Paul
supplies the example in this method of study. He **virtually repeats** his
central message **several times**, thus not only emphasising the greater
content and context, but the **essential and central** thought of his Letter –
in the light of which 2:16 should be understood.

8.2.1.3.1.

Called in One Body

Paul does not address detached persons or parties, **“ye are called
in one body”**, 3:15. Paul does not argue for the sake of debating – he

fighters to win the **Church** and the souls of men for Christ. He fights the good fight while an **adversary** stands ready to “*entice*” believers by “*conceited wisdom*” and “*humility*” (2:18, 23) to “*let go of the Head*”. (2:19) Understanding of this passage will be an understanding of **1, Jesus’ glory, 2, the Church’s freedom, 3, its need of Christ - 4, in the face of man and his own efforts** at righteousness, redemption, salvation and glorification. Paul in the words of life of this Letter holds forth to the Church of Jesus Christ the benefits and the peace and joy and freedom of **Christ**, of **His** excellence, the excellence of his **Lordship** and **Godhead**.

Paul indeed addresses the one issue that divides mankind, that of being found “in Him” or being found “without Christ”! (Eph.2:12)

This is the most conspicuous quality of this Letter of Paul. It brightly hits the ear, concluding every line of thought, “**in Christ**”, “**are ye**”. This is the sum total of everything for the believer, “Christ all in all” and his Body founded and found “in Him” in the day of judgement. This truth is the “fullness of knowledge and understanding”, the Christian’s freedom charter whereby he may **eat, drink, feast, new moon and rest**, his whole life being encompassed by God’s mercies in Christ. “Therefore, let no man judge you in meat or in drink ... of **feasts**, or of new moons, or of Sabbaths (**rest**)”.

The second most transparent quality of this Letter of Paul, is the **adversary** of Christ’s Body, either expressly described, or **just as visibly implied**. Every time Paul says “**in Him**”, “**through Him**” and so on, **Christ’s opposite is supposed – that thing that is, or those men who are not included “in Him”**. **That which is not** contained “by Him” and “in Him”, **that which is not** the “one Body”, “called”, and “growing with the increase of God” and splendid amplitude of Christ. And **that**, is the “**world**” in its “**vainglory**” (not the glory of Christ, 1:27, 3:4)! Every time Paul refers to the saved as “in Him”, he suggests the “**man**” of the “world” who is “**severed from the Head**”. But “puffed up”, the “man” of “philosophy” makes the most fantastic and exorbitant **claims** and **attempts** at having availed, at possessing and at disposing of “**fullness**” in and of wisdom, knowledge and perfection!

8.2.1.3.2.1.

A Realm of Self-Righteousness

The bearing of the passage under consideration, 2:16, can only be truly seen **against the background** of the **adverse**, indeed **fatal** attempt of **natural man** at his own justification. Paul gives a picture, an impression, of **man at his best in this his mighty and lofty attempt at his own salvation**. And **we, see** man trying to lift himself by the shoestrings, very, very devoutly and proudly. What is more, and gives even a darker cast to the background, is self-righteous man’s **ravenous rivalry for the soul of his fellowmen**. This haughty man must drag into

pitiable vainglory **with himself** the **many** and the **high**. He erects not only a **personal** self-righteousness over against “*the righteousness which is of God*”, but an **entire empire** of self-righteousness, “*principalities and powers*” that would if it could “*make a shew*” of **Christ** and the “*principality and power*” the Church, of which “**He** is Head” – verses 1:16 and 2:10! Colossians 2 describes the **conflict** between Christ and this “*rudiment*” of “*vainglory*” (2:8, 23; 3:18) - and it portrays Christ ... Victor!

Man’s is a kingdom of nothing but “*doctrine*”, “*philosophy*”, “*rules*”, “*deceit*”, “*impressiveness*” and “*airy pride*”. It utterly lacks **substance**. It is **not even** “a **shadow**” of Christ’s Kingdom and “*things to come*” – that Kingdom on earth, his “*Body the Church*”. “*But*”, alas for the “man” of the “world”, says Paul, “**Christ’s is the Body**”! The Church, the **arrived, and** the **coming** Kingdom, is **His!**

Paul proclaims **Christ**, **His** excellence and the brightness of his glory seen in his **Church**, over against this haughty, **murky realm** - described or implied. In Colossians chapter 2 Paul describes the glory of Christ and **redemption** “in Him” in the light of **God’s creation, plan and power** put up against the shadowy “*principalities and powers*” of the “*world’s doctrine*” and realm of **false “freedom”**. **Verses 16 to 17 occur where these opposing dominions clash. It is the point of crisis, the point of “judgement”**.

8.2.1.3.2.2.

The Dark Domain of the Ascetic

In Colossians chapter 2 Paul describes the glory of Christ and his work for the redeemed against the shadowy “principalities and powers” of the world’s doctrine of salvation. This supposition is so strongly supported by the content of the whole chapter it needs no better illustration than the mention of verse 5. Paul must have had in mind the “self-inflicted misery” (2: 19/20; 3: 2, 18) of the “worldly wise” (2: 8, 22) ascetics when he wrote, “Though I thought I may be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ”. The ascetic’s “philosophy” knows none of these joys. He is present in the flesh while absent in the spirit, 1:21; 2:21/22: “alienated and hostile”! Paul thought of Christians, intimidated and incriminated by these under bondage (1:23c, 2:29c, 23a; 3:5-6) of “self-inflicted” quasi righteousness. Paul defends the Church against such: “Let no man judge you!” ‘You are free in Christ and are Christ’s own’. “Be not dissuaded” (1:23); “stand fast” - in “your order” and “establishment” (1:12, 23; 2:7; 3:10).

8.2.1.3.2.3.

Philosophy the Accuser and Judge

Obsessive with “*subjection of the will and discomfit and neglect of the body*” (2:18, 23), engrossed persons exactly by **abnegating themselves** of “food” and “drink”, made of “food” and “drink” the kingdom of God! They “*dishonourably neglect the body to the gratification of fleshly desire*”, verse 23. Then **they – these outsiders** - stand ready to reproach and judge the **Church** that does not go along with them! Paul urgently writes the Church this **encouraging** message, “Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of ... a Sabbath”. Paul’s message carries no spark of reprimand, reprove, reproach or criticism, but is full of compassion, empathy and care for those judged – those he prays for (1:9) and undergoes great “conflict for” (2:1). The situation at Colossus was far worse than at Rome! And correspondingly not only Paul’s **countering of the heresy** is the more serious, **but also his defending of the Church**. He **loves** the Church (3:14) with “bowls” of empathy (3:12) - even in its **weakest** moment - and **will defend** it with “wrath” (3:5-6) against its **foes** : - who also are the foes of Christ (1:21). “**Therefore**, Let no man judge you!” “Let no man beguile you of your reward!” “You are Christ’s – his Body, He your Head – not these “principalities” of nonentity.”

The always vague, muddled popular arguments and interpretations of Col.2:16 are unacceptable. They are always **contextually irrelevant**. They never pose the question of, ‘**Who judged “you”?**’ And they never attempt an answer. This question, ‘Who judged “you”?’ is pivotal and is **only** possible from a **comprehensive perspective** of the **total context** of Colossians 2:16. It cannot be asked and in fact is never asked in popular polemics. Simply because popular polemics are obsessed with anti-sabbathism. They cannot see in Colossians 2:16 **anything they don’t or won’t like to see** - that Colossians 2:16 may mean **just the opposite of their liking!**

8.2.1.4.1.

The Feasting and Eating In the Right!

In Colossians chapter 2 Paul describes the excellence of **Christ and his work** for the redeemed against the shadowy “principalities and powers” of the **world’s doctrine of salvation**. Paul’s admonition, “Let no man judge you”, supposes that “you”, **Christians**, who stand under **Christ and his work**, are in the **right and not under judgement** “in food or drink or ... in respect of Sabbaths”. The admonition supposes that the “man” who judges “you” for **this**, is in the **wrong** in **denying** you your **Christian freedom** “in foods or drink or ... in respect of Sabbaths”.

Traditional explanations without exception suppose “**you**” for those who, **in their error** in stead of in their **rights**, keep the Sabbath.

Traditional explanations without exception suppose “**you**” for those who, **in their error** in stead of in their **rights**, stand under Paul’s **judgement!**

At **Rome** then, the problem was **believers** who envied, judged and despised “**one another**” over some **Jewish-Christian** scruples; **the issue arose from within the Church itself**. At Colossus, **distinctively**, a “*philosophic*” and **ascetic “doctrine”** of “*worldly principle*” (2:8) **forced** itself from **outside upon the Church**. The **judging “man”** or men were **strangers** with a **strange doctrine** who tried to “*subject*” the **Church** as they themselves were, to **self-inflicted physical and spiritual torment as the way to redemption and salvation**.

They preached a salvation of the **negation and abnegation of faith and Christian liberty** precisely in their **negation and abnegation of “foods” and “drink” and “of Sabbaths”**. **Theirs** was “*the doctrine of men, a philosophy of vain deceit*” – **not** the doctrine, philosophy or practice of **them** who “*in meat or drink ... or in respect of sabbath days*” **could not be reproached or judged!** **Theirs** was the kingdom or “*principality and power*” of repressive authoritarian judgement; **not** the Kingdom of **God**, the “rule and authority” of rejoicing, feasting, singing, praying and “all things being done in the Name of the Lord Jesus” (3: 8-17).

8.2.1.4.2.

The Free and the Bound

In the Church at **Rome**, the “**strong**” were the free, those who “ate everything” and observed their Christian traditions **without self-denying**. The “weak” were bound by scruples over food and drink. They ate only vegetables and made a show of drinking wine when their “Jewish” brethren abstained for feast-times. At **Colossus** those who ate and drank **without self-denying** were **again, those judged** – by “men” **bound and enslaved. This time by much worse**, by those who through “*severe self-denying of the body*” (23), “*human tradition*” and “*philosophy*” (8) (“*Philosophy*” = asceticism. See Par. 5.3.2.2.5.1.2, *Philostratus*.) **made inroad of false “doctrine” and “conceited” “power / influence”** into the Church. **They**, these renowned, “*famous, showy*” and popular – “*wordly*” ascetics, **enticed** the Church. **They**, judged and coaxed those who **ate and drank**, who, “*in respect of food or in respect of drink ... or in respect of sabbaths*”, were the **free!** Those who **judged the Church** “in food” and “in drink”, were those “*spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit*” (8). **Those who judged** and forbade the enjoyment of “*meat*” and “*drink*” and “*feasts*” were those “*subjected to ordinances like, Touch not! Taste not! Handle not!*” **Those who judged** were “*subjected to dogmas ... subjected to will worship ... subjected to neglect of the body, subjected to its dishonouring, and subjected to the denying of its needs*” (20, 23).

Paul in effect and in fact **defended those who freely enjoyed** “food” and “drink” of “**rests**” – “**rests**” indeed of “feasts, new moons and Sabbath Days”. Not only **usual** food and drink, **but also and specifically**, the “eating and drinking” of “**rests**” – “**rests**”, “**of feasts, of new moons and of sabbaths**”! This passage of Scripture should be seen from and appreciated in the context of the worldview of the time and not from the point in time of modern permissive man. **Paul protected** the happy feasting eaters and drinkers to the honour of the Lord (3:17). The **conceited refused and prohibited** the happy feasting eaters and drinkers to the honour of the Lord their amenities and rests. The “*conceited*” condemned and judged the **Church “in eating” and “in drinking”** pertaining “rests” of “Sabbath Days” unto the Lord.

But, says Paul: **verses 1 to 15, because Christ has set you free, “therefore, let no man judge you in meat and drink, or in meat and drink of feast days, of new moons and of sabbaths”**. Colossians 2:16 means, Paul in effect says, “**Enjoy it!**” Paul’s imperative does **not** mean “**Don’t you eat or drink ... or don’t you observe sabbath days** (because you are Christians!)” Paul’s **imperative** doesn’t mean a **prohibition – even though** the foods and drink and feasts involved were relics of the old dispensation. These relics in any case were of better and longer “*standing*” than the “*fleeting fashion*”, the **philosophy** of asceticism. “*Which all are to perish by the spending of itself*”, 8, 22a. It wasn’t a matter of foods and drink and feasts but of the Church and the Lord of the Church and Christian freedom being menaced and contaminated **verily by the doctrine of abstinence from food, abstinence from drink and abstinence from regard of feast and sabbath days of rest**.

Whereas at **Rome** the problem was an **internal** matter, brother against brother, on matters of **interpretation of tradition**, at **Colossus** the problem was the **introduction** into the Church of a **foreign** and “*worldly principle*” (8) – the **religion of self-will**, “*will-worship*” (23), “*wilful self-humiliation*” (18a). All which are but the expression and discovery of human **pride** (18b) (– as at Rome). Pride “*holds*” not “*onto the Head, Christ*”. Pride pushes Christ from the throne of the heart and off the body of the Church (19). Having **lost** “*hold of Christ the Head*”, the “*enticed*” and “*deceived*” are “*subject*” to the **tyranny** of the “*world*”. (Not, as Barclay claims, to a “*tyranny of the Sabbath*”!)

Paul as it were in verse 20 asks, ‘Why are you **not** eating and feasting?’ “**If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances ...**”, ordinances of **asceticism!** : “*Touch not; taste not; handle not. These ordinances are but the fashion of the day and will die out after having raved out. They are the commandments and doctrine of man that looks impressively wise in worship and submission* (enslavement) *of the will,*

the worship of the neglect, dishonouring and abnegation of the flesh (God’s creation). **But if ye be risen with Christ** (God’s new creation), *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth ... Mortify therefore your* (spiritual) *members which are upon earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry*” (not your physical ailments). It is **not** the selfless and innocent feasting and eating of Christians in remembrance of the great deeds of God and to express their “*thankfulness*” in which Paul so often encourages them. ‘Will you *be fooled by the trickery* of these *first-principles-of-the-world-citizens* and renounce your own Christian citizenship which you celebrate each time you enjoy the food and drink of your feast days and strategic and rest-days? Incredible!’

How then is it possible that polemicists see in Colossians 2:16 a verdict of Paul against the Sabbath?

8.2.1.4.3.

“**Fleshly-minded**” Or “**Renewed in Knowledge**”

“*Your members which are upon earth*” are not the **body of flesh** but the passion and pride of the **heart – see 3:5**. Don’t **chastise the body for your proud heart**, but **spiritually die and be risen with Christ – in Him!** And **therefore feast in the body practically – and practically in the Church. Then “let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in meat and drink of your feasting ...”!** (Cf. 1Cor.5:7, context.)

But allow yourselves to be **intimidated and judged and debauched**, and “*ye are subject to ordinances ... after the commandments of men*”, verses **20, 22. These are the “men” – tis**, of verse **16! They** are the “*man*” who judges and “weighs” (= “judges”) the Church “*in respect of food and drink*” and **on the opposite scale**, places “*things that have an impressive show of wisdom, of will worship and of humility*”. But, says Paul, he “*dishonourably neglects the body to the gratification of fleshly desire*”, verse 23. “*Beware lest any man spoil you through* (this) *philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the principles of the world, and not after Christ*”, Paul had said in 2:8 already.

“*Powers*”, verse 15, are no more than “*philosophies*”, and “*principalities*” are no more than so-called “*first principles*” or “*rudiments of the world*”. They are “*vain*” “*neglect of the body*”, **not** at all pious or glorious, but “**dishonourable**”. It basically and essentially is “*gratification of fleshly desire*”. But **he**, this “*man*” of such “*wisdom*”, “*blames* (judges) *the Christian* of gratification of fleshly desires in eating, drinking and feasting!”. He **presumptuously** “judges you in food, drink, feasts”.

Throughout Colossians Paul holds forth **Jesus Christ** as the only way to and standard of the “*peace*” of **God’s** “*rule to which also ye are called in one body*”. (3:15) Paul in 2:18, repeats his warning of verse 16, “*Don’t let yourselves be measured to any man’s stature!*” – *mehdeis hymahs katabrabeyetoh*. Man’s standards are “*ordinances after the commandments of men*”. “*Don’t you be persuaded by their worship, be it of angels!* (– privilege of only the initiated ascetics.) *Don’t be judged by these men’s standards who being carnally minded intrude into things they don’t understand but pretend and are puffed up about*”. (2:18)

8.2.1.5.1.

At Heart a Problem of the Heart

Just as in the Church at Rome man’s **proud heart** was the **real problem** – the problem at Colossus was man’s proud heart **hiding behind physical pretension and hypocritical chastisement of the body**. And the lower in subjection and infliction of the “*flesh*” the higher and prouder the (heart of) “**man**”. “*Man*” elevates himself - the standard to all not so “*spiritually*”-“*carnally minded*” as **he**. Paul says, *Let not that man judge you in meat and drink or whatever!* “*Let no man therefore*”, says Paul, *beguile you of your reward (in Christ Jesus) ...*. Enjoy your Christian liberty and eat and drink and feast as you may see fit, “*only set your affection on things above : if ye be risen with Christ*” and if ye be not already *enticed and beguiled!* (3:1-2)

“Let no man force you to choose between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world”, Paul in effect says in Colossians 2:16-17. “It will be a decision that flies in the face of **godly** “wisdom” because it will mean the betrayal of your inheritance. It will be a choice between something **substantial and real** and a **phantasm and shadow**. There is no decision to be made: **Christ conquered**; He **vanquished** “*principalities and powers and made the fool of them*”. “Let **no** man, therefore, **judge** you!” Let no man play the fool, at **you, who are Christ’s!**

“Thus my dear brethren in Jesus Christ may I encourage you, today, in this place, on this God’s Sabbath Day, to keep and guard it in the fear of God and in the sight of the world and opposition. Be prepared to suffer for Christ by your private and public honouring of God’s Sabbath Rest. Amen.”

Could Paul have ended his sermon thus, were he “present in the flesh” in the Colossian Congregation? Undoubtedly it could be possible - **had Sabbath-keeping** been the problem. But seeing it **was not** the problem, Paul would **not** have closed his sermon in this manner. But if Paul preached to a Sabbath-keeping Community **today** such an ending to his sermon would have been most apt.

8.2.1.5.2.

“Judged” Or “Blameless”?

Quoting Colossians 2:16-17, enthusiasts say, “See, you should not keep the **Sabbath!** The Sabbath is a “*weak and beggarly principle*”, say they jumping to Galatians 4:9! The Sabbath stands trial and the reader has become the judge! But the sober Christian must admit, “*Let no man judge you, in respect of the Sabbath*”. Paul supposes the **Christian who observes the Sabbath, and, the Sabbath, blameless**. Otherwise he could not have said, “*Let no man judge you in respect ... of the Sabbath*”. Otherwise he should have said, “**You are judged, judged because** you observe the Sabbath! **Stop** to do it and let no one prescribe to you to keep the Sabbath again!” (NAB) But no, **this** says Paul: “*Let no man judge you in respect of ... the Sabbath*”.

That is **supposing** Paul in the clear **English** of the Authorised Version **speaks of the Sabbath Day**. (See soon.)

8.2.1.5.3.

“Don’t be Prescribed?”

Does Paul mean, “Let no one keep the Sabbath!” **for the reasons** he mentions in chapter 2 from verse 1 to 15? Especially verse 15 is important, “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He parades them publicly in triumphant procession.*” **Does Paul ‘therefore’ mean, as the New Afrikaans Bible reads,** that “*nobody should therefore prescribe to you what you should eat or drink, nobody should prescribe to you that you must ... keep the Sabbath?*” **Just the opposite!** “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He parades them publicly in triumphant procession*” **suggests exactly** the celebrating **Church** no reason why not with “*meat*” and “*drink*”, and exactly its **celebrating** no reason why not with “*meat*” and “*drink*” – “*meat*” and “*drink*” ... “*of feasts*” because of Christ’s “*spoiling*” of “*principalities*”; and with “*meat*” and “*drink*” ... “*of months*” because of Christ’s “*triumph over powers*”; and with “*meat*” and “*drink*” ... “*of sabbath days*” because of Christ’s “*peace*” (1:20; 3:15), “*preached to every creature*” (1:23), to “*every man perfected*” (28), and because of “*all fulness in Him*” (1:19), and “*completion in Him*” (2:10), for “*giving thanks to God and the Father by Him ... all in the Name of the Lord Jesus*” (3:17). As Paul said in Romans 14, “he who regards the day regards it to the honour of the Lord and thank God”! Does it make sense then, **to begin** by saying, “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He parades them publicly in triumphant procession*”, **and to conclude** by saying, “*Let no one therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in meat or drink of feasts, of seasons or of sabbath days?*” How could it **not** make sense?

If Paul said, “Nobody should therefore prescribe to you what you should eat or drink, nobody should prescribe to you that you must ... keep the Sabbath”, he **forbids** the Sabbath. If Christ triumphed over principalities and powers of evil and the Sabbath were included He triumphed over the Sabbath – which He created! – as an **evil** thing and paraded its **shame**. Had the Sabbath **not** been created by God **through Christ**, had it **not** been vindicated by God **in Christ**, shamed it Christ and called He not Himself its Lord, **then no place** for the Sabbath in the present reality which is “**Christ all in all**”! So it is utterly impossible to suggest or to imagine – or to ‘translate’ as do the NAB, that Paul could have meant, “Nobody should therefore prescribe ... to you that you must ... keep the Sabbath”.

Such a ‘translation’ is no translation but the abuse of privilege and if anything proves contempt for the Word of God. (“For if I do this thing willingly I should be paid for it, but if compelled it is because of the responsibility of my stewardship”, 1Cor.9:17.)

Not all translations are as arrogant as the NAB. The Old Afrikaans Bible interprets the text more cautiously, “*Let nobody judge you over food and drink, or (let nobody judge you) concerning ... a Sabbath*”. (The Authorised Version is much the same.) **There is a world’s difference between (not) to be judged concerning something, and (not) to be prescribed to do (or not to do) something.** The first requires Christian freedom; the second denies Christian freedom.

8.2.1.6.

Not Allowing Christian Liberty

What is of **relevance** in Colossians 2:16, as in the case of judging in Romans 14:5, is “food” and “drink”. As at Rome, also at Colossus, “eating” and “drinking” were the issue. Only there were two differences in the circumstances of the two congregations. In the Congregation at Rome the issue concerned eating and drinking of “regarded” and “esteemed” “days”, obviously of Old Testament institutional worship. At Colossus the “food” and “drink” were of the same kind, as at Rome, but it also involved food not meant for ceremonious celebration but for daily nourishment. In the second place, the issue at Colossus concerned **not** the **enjoyment** of “food” and “drink” but **abstinence and abnegation** of “food” and “drink”.

“Let no man” – who allows not himself the Christian liberty, and who allows not others the Christian liberty – “judge you in “meat or drink”. Believers who ate and drank and feasted were judged by the rules of “philosophy” (8) and “the rudiments of the world” (8, 20) where Gnostic asceticism held sway.

8.2.2.

What “You Should Not Be Judged” About

Does Paul say what the New Afrikaans Bible literally says, “*Don’t let anyone prescribe to you to celebrate the Sabbath*”? Is Paul talking about the **Sabbath** and is he talking about **celebration** of it? But even before that question could be considered it must be asked, does Paul write about a matter **concerning the Sabbath** or is he writing about a matter **concerning food and drink**? And one may answer, ‘The question is silly because Colossians 2: 16 says that Paul discusses a matter “*in respect of sabbath days*”! **But remembering the broader context and the immediate connection between the triumphant redemption obtained by Christ and the issue over judgements passed on the Congregation, if Paul should have said that, he actually would contradict himself.**

The issue must be **reduced to this**: Is it “*in respect of food or drink*” as well as “*in respect of sabbath days*” that Paul says, “*Don’t be judged!*”? Or is it “*in respect of food or drink*” **only** that he says, “*Don’t be judged!*”? From a reading of the older translations it may fairly be objected that such a question is unnecessary and beside the point, but not, considering the **discrepancies highlighted through newer translations**. One’s complacency is shocked in discovering that Paul **does not say the same** about “*food*” and “*drink*” than what he says about “*an holyday*”, “*the new moon*”, and “*sabbath days*”!

At the root of the **older translations**, lies the idea that judgement is passed on persons “**in respect of**”, “food” and “drink” and “**in respect of**”, “a Sabbath”. These translations without exception precisely as they **relate** “judgement” and “food” and “drink”, relate “judgement” and “**Sabbath days**”. “Let no man judge you **in** meat or drink, or **in respect of** ... the Sabbath days”, says the AV.

While **newer** translations differ so seriously from the older, the student must judge both older and newer translations for himself from the Greek while considering the following.

8.2.2.1.1.

The Dative

“*Food*” and “*drink*” is in the **Dative**, and the Dative appears **because** of its most **fundamental function**: It **refers and relates**. Compare Romans 6:2, to illustrate, “we that are dead **to** sin” = “we are dead **in respect of** sin / **with reference to** sin / **in relation to** sin”. The Greek? *Apethanomen tehi hamartiai*. And the Greek in **Col.2:16**? *Meh oun tis krinetoh en brohsehi kai en posehi*.

Also refer to Romans 2:1, “Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself” – *en hohi krineis ton heteron seauton katakrineis*; 2Cor.2:1, “As far as I am concerned I have decided” – *ekrina emautohi*; 1Cor.11:13, “Judge for yourselves” – *en hymihn autois krintate*.

In Colossians 2:16 it is the same, “Let no one judge you in meat or in drink” – *meh tis hymahs krinetoh en brohsehi kai en posehi*. “Meat” and “drink” are in the Dative. “Let not people judge you **with regard to** “meat and drink”. “Eating” and “drinking” caused the “saints” to be judged. They were **judged** pertaining “meat” and “drink”.

Personal interest and relation are basic to the meaning of the verb “to **judge**” - *krinoh*. Personal interest and relation at the same time are fundamental to the **Dative’s** meaning and use. The Dative **and** the verb in the instance of their use in Colossians 2:16a mutually complement the basic meaning and function of the Dative. Anything and all that **follow** after this Dative and this predicate and to which it might **relate**, one should **expect** to be in the Dative. In the sentence, “Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days”, the nouns, “meat”, “drink”, “day”, “moons”, “sabbaths”, the adjectives, “holy” and “new”, and the article, “the”, should **all** appear in the **Dative**. And in the English all in fact appear to the dictates of the Dative! It all should be Datives because the verb “judge” **relates** to it **all**. “Let no man **judge** you **relating** meat or drink, or let no man **judge** you **relating** an holyday, or let no man **judge** you **relating** the new moon, or let no man **judge** you **relating** the sabbath days”. One to the drive of the **English** language expects the Dative and direct relation and **finds it!** Would it be sound reasoning to also expect direct relation and consequently the Dative in the **Greek** language? **Especially so** in the Greek language because personal relation and directed reference in the Greek language **specifically belong to the fundamental meaning and function of the Dative!**

But one is surprised **not** to find the Dative **throughout** the Greek text of this passage. Its usual translation **as if everything following the verb “judge”, relates to the verb, as if** “you should not be judged in respect of, **meat, or, drink, or, an holyday, or, the new moon, or, sabbath days**”, **all** on equal footing “(not) judged”, must have a problem. To say, “Let no man **judge** you **in respect of**”, this, “**or**” that, **regardless, must** be wrong! What Paul did **not** write in the **Dative, should not** be included **with** the things he **did** write in the Dative. Paul wrote in the Dative **only** “meat”, and, “drink”. Paul did **not** write anything else and specifically not “sabbath days” in the Dative. So one should find out what Paul actually wrote about “Sabbaths”.

8.2.2.1.2. “In Respect of ...”

In each instance where *meros* is used in the New Testament with a meaning of **relevance**, it naturally as one would expect, is used with a **Dative**:

1 Peter 4:16, “for the sake of this Name” – *en tohi onomati toutohi*, or - according to the variant, “If a person may suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but glorify God **on this behalf**” – *en meros toutohi*.

“For even that which was made glorious had no glory **in this respect** (*en toutohi tohi merehi*) by reason of the glory that excelleth”, 2Cor.3:10. “In this respect” refers to “the ministration of condemnation” **with reference to** “the ministration of righteousness”, verse 9.

“Lest our boasting of you should be in vain **in this behalf**” – *en tohi merei toutohi*. That is, “Lest our boasting of you **pertaining this matter** should be in vain”, 2Cor.9:3.

Meros, if used with the **Dative** indicates **relation**. In view of these examples of its use, where used in Col.2:16, *meros* with the **Dative** awaits the reader. Or so he would think. The Dative does **not** occur and in stead a **Genitive** greets the eye. Then why continue to **translate** with a Dative, with the Dative of **relation** and **personal concern**? **It cannot be explained because it is wrong**. What *meros* points to in the context – the things that **relate to** *meros* – are **already** stipulated. **They are “food” and “drink”**.

8.2.2.2. The Genitive

The whole phrase “an holyday, or the new moon, or the sabbath days” is determined by the prepositional noun, *meros* – which means “**part of**”, “**division**”, “**pertinence**”, “**specifically belonging to**”. Cf. “**dimerous**”, two **segmented** (tarsi of insect); from *meros* - to separate or release, and *krinein* - to separate or judge, “**merocrine**”, “**released**” or “**secreted**” (substance **without** disintegration of cell); “**holocrine**”, “**released**” or “**secreted**” (substance with disintegration of whole cell); “**apocrine**”, “**released**” or “**secreted**” (with part of cell lost). (Colins Dictionary)

The words, “**feast**”, “**new moon**”, and “**sabbaths**” in the sentence, “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast (“**holyday**”), or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days”, in the Greek are in the **Genitive** inflection. The basic meaning of the Genitive is to indicate **possession**, as a child **belongs** to the mother who gives “**birth**” to it - the Latin word *gignere* from which the word “**Genitive**” comes. Our words appear and function in the case of **Possession, not** in the case of **Relation** of the **Dative**. Now re-phrase the sentence while these words in the Genitive are **rendered** in the Genitive, “Let no man judge you in

meat or in drink, or belonging to feasts or belonging to new moons, or belonging to sabbath days”, and it is obvious that between the words “or” and “belonging”, **something is amiss** – something that must “belong” to these “feasts”, “new moons” and “sabbaths”. Of course it would be that which by way of the Ellipses of Relation is **implied!** The Genitive perfectly synchronises with the Dative to give the **true** meaning of the sentence, “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or, let no man judge you in respect of **meat or drink belonging** to feasts or in respect of **meat or drink belonging** to new moons, or in respect of **meat or drink belonging** to sabbath days”! This is not only the real meaning of the original, but the only.

And this meaning makes of the thing about which the Church should not be judged, **not the Sabbath!** It makes the thing about which the Church should not be judged, “**food or drink** ... *food or drink ordinary* (koinos) or *food or drink extraordinary, i.e., food or drink belonging to feasts, new moons or sabbath days*”. “Let no one judge you ... in respect of it!”

Sources maintain that the **Genitive** has the meaning of relation / reference when used with reference to *meros* with the preposition *en* - “with”. Examples usually given, are, *en trophes merei, en xaritohs merei, en merei logou* and, from the New Testament, Col.2:16, *en merei heortehs eh neomehnihs eh sabbatohn*.

But their claim is contestable. They **deduce a rule** of grammar from the traditional interpretation of Colossians 2:16 in stead of to **interpret** Colossians 2:16 **to the rules** of grammar. As far as the **standard examples** of the Genitive’s alleged use of relation is concerned, **not one** of them forced or unforced has the meaning of relation. **Every** of the four cases in the New Testament of the use of the preposition *en* with *meros* is associated with and followed by a **Dative**. The context consistently indicates that the Genitive with *meros* and the preposition *en* is **attributive** – which is the Genitive’s **basic meaning**. *E.g.*, Is.18:7 (LXX), *en merei potamou tehs xohras autou* – “in a region of many rivers of / in his country”. The idea is **not**, “with reference, to a river of his country”. Also not in Col.2:16, “with reference, to a feast / new moon / sabbaths”, but, “with reference to **food or drink, belonging to / of a feast** ...” – *en merei brohsei kai posei heortehs* ...”, the phrase *en merei brohsei kai posei* (“with reference to food or drink”) implied and functioning as an **ellipsis**. The Genitive in Col.2:16 is one of **definition** or **belonging** or **attribute**, or even a Genitive of relation (which is not a real Genitive) **where the concept which indicates relation is omitted** and it is **assumed** the relationship is **known** or has been made sufficiently clear by the **context**, in this incidence by the mention of *en brohsei kai en posei eh en merei k.t.l.*

8.2.2.3.

Ellipses

“Food” and “drink” by way of **ellipsis** are **supposed**. The **omission** of “food” and “drink” does **not** mean the **end** of its relation and bearing on the subject, but its **continued (repeated) relevance** to the subject: “Let no one judge you in food and drink, or in respect of food and drink of a holyday, or in respect of food and drink of the new moon, or in respect of food and drink of sabbath days”.

Also the **predicate**, “**Don’t be judged**” is by way of **ellipsis** kept **continually relevant** throughout the remainder of the verse. “**Let no one judge you** in respect of food and drink, or let no one judge you in respect of food and drink of an holyday, or let no one judge you in respect of food and drink of the new moon, or let no one judge you in respect of food and drink of sabbath days”.

“Food”, and “drink” are in Col.2:16 by the linguistic tool of **inflection** and **ellipsis** the real and actual causal factor of the malicious “judging” (16), “spoiling” (8), “beguiling” (18), “subjecting” (20) and unsettling (15) of established, rooted and peaceful believers. **NOT THE SABBATH!** Judgement should be aimed against not the Sabbath or believers that keep the Sabbath, but against the “**man**” who judges, spoils, beguiles, subjects and unsettles the Church of Christ “**in respect of food and drink**”.

8.2.2.4.

“Eating” and “Drinking”

The Church should not be judged concerning “food or drink” ... not by “any man” of the “world”! More exactly the words *brohsis* and *posis* indicate “the **act** of eating” rather than “food” (for eating); “the **act** of drinking” rather than “drink” (for drinking); It is not a matter of judgement “between” food and food, “between” drink and drink. There is no question here about “clean” or “unclean” foods therefore, no judgement about “meat” offered to idols, either. The matter is “**in eating** and **in drinking**”; “**in respect of eating and drinking**” – “**in respect of eating and drinking belonging to**” the **occasion**, whether the occasion “**of feast, of new moon or of sabbaths**”.

8.2.3.

The Present Church Not Yet the Full Stature of Christ

The traditionally accepted way to explain the “**shadow**” Paul speaks of immediately after he mentions “food and drink” is that the “**shadow**” should refer to the last mentioned thing or things, the “sabbaths”, the “new moons” and the “feasts” and “eating and drinking”, but especially the Sabbath for our purpose. “Which things are a shadow (*ha estin skia*) of things to come”. Next it is alleged that being a shadow means the Sabbath is of a **passing nature**.

Traditionally also the Sabbath is understood for the shadow that points to **Christ** that is, or rather **was**, the “(thing) **coming**” - *tohn mellontohn*. “These things” - *ha*, then, the Sabbath, had been a shadow of Christ-the-coming or the Christ of the Promises. Which idea in itself no one can deny or would want to deny (except perhaps some). Which idea also does not mean the Sabbath’s abrogation, but its founding in Jesus Christ - which all but few deny. Which ideas in all would be **relevant** here, were it Paul’s intent to make one understand it, and had the text said so. But neither was it Paul’s intent nor does the text say so.

The text conveys Paul’s intent. The Text says that, **in Paul’s time**, “*the Sabbath is a shadow presently*”. (That presupposes the observance of the Sabbath at the time of Paul’s writing. It implies the correctness of Prof. Bacchiocchi’s pithy interjection, “*The judge ... wanted the Colossian believers to do less feasting and more fasting*”.) Then Paul says the shadow is a shadow “of the nearing (things)”. Then one reads the Authorised Version saying, “**but**” – “but the body is of Christ”. That contrasts “things to come” with “the body”. And from this arises the customary rendering, that “**the body is Christ**”, **identifying** the two things, “body”, and, “Christ”. On the basis of this presumption is built the dogmatic interpretation, ‘The Sabbath is but a shadow of fleeting things, but the substance, the abiding structure, is Christ’. The worst thing then comes of this: This rendering or interpretation or paraphrasing is presented as a “**Translation**” or “**Version**”, “Thus says the Lord”! Only into such a liberal rendering is it possible to read anything to one’s liking. As that to the “*practice*” of the Sabbath “*as such*” the “*Colossian false teachers*” added “*regulations*” of “*dietary taboos*” and “*dietary practices*” and that Paul actually “*denounces*” these and not the “*practice*” of the Sabbath “*as such*”. (Which, we shall soon see, **in effect** creates argument **against** the Sabbath and leaves it not unscathed.)

This all stems from the contrast created by the connective, “**but**” between “things to come” and “body”. The Greek words are *to de*, article and conjunctive. Compare Acts 17:32, “**Some** (*hoi men*) began to mock, **but others** (*hoi de*) others said, “We want to hear you”. Is the situation here in Col2:17 the same, *to men ... to de*? “**these things ... but the other thing**”? Simply, No! It is **not** a case of any **special** use of the article - **contrast**, but quite the ordinary, to **identify**. “... *The article in the New Testament carries with it a pronounced heritage from its demonstrative origin, and one would make a serious blunder to ignore this fact*”. (Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the GNT*.) While the articles are demonstrative and defining, the passage should read, “... food, or drink ... of Sabbaths which are a shadow of what is nearing, indeed the Body of Christ” – as simple as possible, as literal as possible, as unprejudiced as possible. Thus this text indicates but one thing for “these things” – *ha*,

the before-mentioned “*practices*”; but one thing for the “body”, the before-mentioned “**these things**”; and but one thing for what is “Christ’s”, the before-mentioned “**Body**”. And the whole and total contains no bit of the “*teachings of the false teachers*”.

The shadow does not point from the **Old** Covenant to the day of Christ. It **from** Jesus’ work and the finishing of His Work **in vanquishing death in triumph of resurrection** (verse 15 especially) and from the **current practice** of the Church, from its eating and drinking and feasting, **points to the Body that is Christ’s! The Body is *tohn mellontohn*** – “yet in the process of being realised / coming together / being formed”. The “things nearing” are “things” of the **last days** - which are of the **Christian dispensation** or New Covenant times. Undoubtedly the Church occupies that time-slot and naturally would be called by Paul the Body of Christ. Christ says the Kingdom is coming and indeed is present already. Just so Paul says, “these things are a shadow of **what is near**” - **yet already is present** as “the Body which is Christ’s”. The Body and the shadow cannot be separated. The shadow is the Body’s.

Paul in this recognises **the in his day still ongoing process** of transformation of the Old into the New Testament **Church – not** dispensations, because that already had reached turning point in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Church was “**presently being** rooted, and **presently being** built up in Him and **presently being confirmed** in the Faith according to the way you **had** been taught”, verse 7. “Beware lest any man spoil you” **while this is going on!** The Church did not by the snap of the finger reach the point of the full stature of Christ. Throughout his Letters Paul admonishes the Church – which almost entirely consisted of Jews and but few Gentiles who also had to become part of the body via the Synagogue and had to be grafted in on the trunk that only bear Jewish branches – to press forward to **fullness in Christ**. **Yet Paul in spite of the Church’s incompleteness** permits no “worldly principle”, “philosophy”, “doctrine of man”, “rule of power” to “measure” or “judge you”, 2:16, or to “spoil”, “beguile” or “sever” “you” the **Body from the Head, because, “in Him ye are complete already!** (2:10) And that, you rightfully celebrate – so don’t be judged therein! ”

How many times does Paul say, “**in Him**”? Christ is **Representative** of the Church, the Body’s Head. The Church **lacks nothing “in Him” - “in Him” has no bit to improve or to grow or to shed or to outgrow** in order to be acceptable in God’s Kingdom, in fact, needs not do any of these things in order to **be** God’s Kingdom! **Every condition** had been fulfilled “**in Christ**”: “Blotting out the handwriting against us, ordinances contrary to us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers He put them to

shame in public, triumphing over them in it” – “in it”, **the work of Christ described from verse 1 to 15!** Christ had done everything for his Church that Judaism as well as philosophy could dream to do. He did much more. In fact, He answered to every demand of **God’s** law and the ordinances of the past era (2:14). He has made propitiation for sins and thus triumphed gloriously (2:15) over “the accuser (Jn.5:45) of the brethren ... by the power of his Christ”! (Rv.12:10). **At this point in his argument Paul exclaims, “let no man therefore judge you ...”** You who are found in **this** Christ, “let no man therefore judge you”. You while “growing with the increase of God” (19), “let no man therefore judge you”! *“You and I know “these things” – your “feasting” – that upset the world (“man”) so much, are but a shadow of things to come, a shadow proportionate of that Body that eventually will be Christ’s”. You are his Church and just think of what you are becoming “in Him”! Something of such beauty and greatness is to come of this what you at this point in time are. Therefore don’t be beguiled by any man of your reward. Soon Christ shall have pre-eminence among you (1:18). “God will finish the work He has begun among you” (Ro.9:28), being knit together with the bond of perfection, which is love (3:14). Soon your eating and drinking of feasts may be nothing compared to Christ when He will be all in all of you (3:11). Christ in you, the hope of glory! But these men (*anthrohpōs*) who tell you that you must glory in the mortification of the **physical** body – don’t measure yourselves to their standards (“the standards / doctrines of the world”), but mortify such fleshly members still part of you such as fornication, uncleanness. These are members not of the physical body but of the heart that must be “plucked out” as Jesus said.’*

The Church still had to grow in two respects, It had yet to **outgrow** the “milk” it was raised on, the “food and drink” of the Old Testament “baby”-Church, verses **14 and 16**. And it had to **conquer** by the blood of Jesus those **sins** of **fleshly** man ever present in the greatest of saints and in the Church at its best. **The first as a shadow of the Church would follow. The second the power of Christ had overcome – verses 15 and 18.** Under these circumstances the Church cannot afford to be “deceived” (4, 8, 18) by a mere “show of wisdom” (23) of the world and man’s doctrines. **In this time slot of its history** the Church should not be lured off the track to seemingly very religious and spiritual “philosophies” but should go on in the end to triumph by the power of Christ as in its quest it is triumphant already “in Him”!

There are in this Scripture indicated, the three main “principalities and powers” in their vital interrelationship: **Christ the Head**, the **Body** Corporate, and the **world**. In Christ is **fullness** – fullness of wisdom and virtue; in the **Body is coming into being** the full stature of Christ – the

outgrowing of its child’s shoes and “putting on of the New Man Christ; and the **world** “rules” pretence, show and “vain deceit”. Paul defends and protects the Body from the inroads and attacks of the world. He poises the “creation” of God over against the world; Christ and his work over against the wisdom and principles and principalities of the world, the Body over against the “man” (*anthrohpōs*) of the world.

Paul does not judge, accuse or condemn the Church over anything whatsoever - the **world** and the **man** of the world do. **And this provides the scenario, the parading ground for Christ’s victorious manifestation in his Body the Church** (previously “alienated, enemies in mind through wicked works”) “**presented in His sight unblameable, unreprouvable**” ... “**in Him**”!

8.2.4.1.

“The Colossian Heresy”

Now **from where** comes the “*Colossian heresy*”? From theologians and dogmaticians! From where comes judgement over the Sabbath and its keeping? From the wilful reading into and translating into this Scripture the antipathy of these theologians and dogmaticians. That is so apparent it hurts the eye. Paul’s whole remonstrance **contrasts** the world over against Christ’s body. The heresy and its assault on the Body are launched from **outside** – **by the world, onto** the Church. The heresy is the **world’s** - and **not the Church’s**. The Church in its confidently going its own way, the way of the Gospel and the providence of God, **provokes the world’s scorn**. Paul elsewhere puts it this way: The wisdom of God is foolishness to the world. The fullness of the world is emptiness for the Kingdom of God. The principalities and powers of the world over against the principality and power of Christ Jesus in his Church are weighed up the one against the other. The world puts up a hoax, the Body of Christ grows, and Christ rules on triumphantly.

Paul **condones** the Church in its **confidence** in Christ and His victory. “**Therefore**”, says Paul, “**because** of Christ having spoiled principalities and powers ... having blotted out” the only “exhibit of evidence against us”. “**Therefore** don’t let any man judge you (any man who despises you for whom and what you are - the Body of Christ). Don’t allow yourselves to be judged even in these things, the least of your confidence in Christ Jesus. “You should not be beguiled of your reward”, not even “in your eating or drinking or in respect of the eating and drinking of your feasting, or resting”, “for these things are a shadow of what awaits” you “the increase of God!” I, Paul do not hinder or discourage you. I don’t judge you. Don’t let “any man” of the world! Be yourselves. Put your hopes on Jesus Christ for He is the embodiment of the fullness of God. **Certainly you must still grow** to reach “the increase of God” which He intended for you, but that does not mean you must

adapt or measure yourselves to the “principles of the world”, according to its “wisdom” and the “doctrines of men”. No, set Christ before you and strive to reach the fullness you **have “in Him”** and what **He** obtained on your behalf and for you.’ (“The just shall live by faith”.)

8.2.4.2.

What “Sabbaths”?

What “sabbaths”, is Paul speaking of in Col.2:16? Does he speak about the **Seventh Day, weekly Sabbath** of the **Fourth Commandment** and for the commemoration of God’s **Rest in Finishing** all his Works, or of **yearly Sabbaths** for the commemoration of God’s **Rest in Finishing** all his Works? (I have not repeated myself.)

In the **first** place these feasts and days are **occasions of feasting**, and feasting in celebration and commemoration of **God’s great deeds of salvation in Jesus Christ**. So **it does not matter** what Sabbath or Sabbaths Paul has in mind. He has in mind the whole and practical living of Christ’s Body. It does not matter whether the Sabbath is called a shadow as if that would imply its abrogation and annulment. For as the Body shall be because it is Christ’s, so shall the shadow be because it is the Body’s. And as the Body shall increase because it increases with the growing power that is God’s, so shall the shadow increase with the increase of the Body that is Christ’s. And will the Sabbath even be a thing to be glad and joyous and festive for, “in honour of the Lord and thankfulness to God”. For see, “this, the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it!” Ps.118:24.

Paul refers to Old Testament feasts, but “Christianised”. They are (temporarily) **accepted Christian** practice. Paul sensitively and with empathy steers the Church towards an eventual appropriation of these “**shadow**” **services fully by faith only**. He works towards an appreciation of these symbolic feasts “**in Christ**” and “**in Him**” **only**. The ideal has not been reached yet. “**Things to come**” are **yet to be** the Body, which “is of **Christ**” **only**. “*Therefore don’t be fooled by the philosophy and vain deceit*” of the “*world’s*” “*wisdom*” that **pretends** to have reached “**fullness**”, **already**, and **without Christ!** “*Don’t let any man lure you away from your reward*” **waiting** at the end when “fullness” will finally be reached. Paul as an honest **Christian** admits the Church’s **incompleteness** while the world and man pretend **dishonestly** to have reached fullness already.

Second. These occasions of feasting are characterised by its “**eating and drinking**” – by its “food and drink” - belonging to **joyful and innocent festivity** through which love and communion of the brethren were maintained. “In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand pleasures for evermore!”, Ps.16:11. It could be the Church still observed these feasts **for the sake of the brethren** “*according to the*

circumcision of the flesh” (1:11) the **Jews**. Even the **Gentile** Christians could thus have proved their solidarity with the Jewish nation. It could be the Church still observed these feasts so that the “**in the flesh** circumcised” that were not “circumcised with the circumcision made **without hands**”, could be “circumcised with the circumcision of **Christ in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh**”. It could be the Church still observed these feasts **to win these over** to the Church and the faith of Jesus. It **must** be the Church **today** should observe God’s Sabbath Day for the same purpose to win lost souls for the King of their salvation. (At Rome the Church erred greatly in making the “food and drink” of these feasts, “God’s Kingdom” – so much so that **brother** “judged” and “despised” **brother** over “food and drink”. There the “eating and drinking” were not a “feasting”, the instrument of love and **unity** but the cold and hurting instrument of **division**.) Surely at **Colossus** the Church “regarded” these “feasts” “**to the honour of the Lord**” and through its “esteem”, “**thanked God**” (as did the Christians at Rome).

At Colossus the celebration “**in eating and drinking**” was not only in **remembrance** of God’s great deeds of the past, but also in **expectancy** of what He was still **going to do**. Its celebrations were “a shadow of **things to come**, even the Body that is Christ’s” – the “increase with the increase of God” (2:19c). The Church must have celebrated these feasts through “eating and drinking” while being **aware** of the “growth” still “**in store**” for the Body of Christ. “By joints and bands nourished, knit together” (2:19b) with “charity the bond of perfectness, **ruled by the peace of God in the heart**” (3:14-15, “Thy gentleness has made me great”, Ps.18:35.) the Community feasted, eating and drinking **in Godly fear and joy**, fearing no man, **reading Paul’s Letter**. This, the Church on these “feasts” and “rest days” and “new moons” – three times “**rest**”-days – did. Naturally they also would do it on the **weekly Sabbath Days**? Then why does Paul not mention the Sabbath? Because he **classed** the Sabbath with the yearly “sabbath days”? Or because he **took for granted** the regular Assembly and festivity of the Church’s Sabbaths? Paul now (“*gently*”) **supports** the Church in its observance of these days and their eating and drinking customs. But he also reminds the Church of the nature of “these things”. They are but a “shadow” of what Christ’s Church is to become. Would Paul naturally have included the weekly Sabbath in this his kaleidoscope of the future? He would have presupposed the **Day for its Communion and Worship and Rest** of the grown body of Christ of course! Once the Body was grown to the measure of Christ, “a keeping of the Sabbath (will still) remain for the People of God” (in the words of Hebrews 4:9).

Had the Sabbath been included under the interim “sabbaths”, under those “shadow”-sabbaths of “eating and drinking”, Paul would not have

described them by their **collective name**, “feasts, new moons, sabbaths”, “**according to the order**”. Cf. 1Chr.23:31; 2Chr.2:4; 31:3; Neh.10:33. Paul meant what he said and no more than what this **typical description** permits (in Ezra 3:5 only called “feasts”). The Sabbath does not fall within the **type** “*feasts, new moons and sabbath days*”. The Sabbath does not **sort** under the **category** of “feasts, new moons and sabbath days *to which pertains food and drink*”. This is another instance of that silent thunder, that “*spectacular absence*” (to use Krister Stendahl’s terminology out of context) of the Sabbath’s **presence** in the life of the Church. The Sabbath is not specifically mentioned because it naturally is supposed. It is supposed not for being a day of “food or drink”, but for its essential rest and festivity.

The feasts specified in Col.2:16 are feasts known for their “**eating and drinking**” and the “eating and drinking” **are the things** the Church should not let itself be “**judged in**” – not the “feasts” as “*practices*” “*as such*”. The Sabbath is not characterised by such “**things** that are a shadow”. The Sabbath **in itself** may be considered a shadow (a symbolic and prophetic phenomenon) in that it witnesses to God’s great deeds of salvation. But Scripture **never describes the Sabbath as a shadow**. Since in Col.2:16 the “**eating**” and “**drinking**” are the “things” actually concerned and the “**feasts**” thereby involved but **indirectly**, the Sabbath cannot answer to this distinguishing feature. The Sabbath **essentially and intrinsically** is not a day of “eating and drinking” customs and ceremonies. **It essentially and intrinsically is a Day observed spiritually in faith purely for the life and worship of the Body of Christ.** And if occupied with “eating and drinking” it will be the eating and drinking of the Lord’s Supper - which is a Christian institution and of parallel validity with the Sabbath.

That “things to be” worked out the way Paul **envisaged** is obvious from the fact the Church since times immemorial has not celebrated the **New Moons**. The New Testament does not mention the Church observing the Day of Atonement once, or the Feast of Tabernacles. But it does mention the Church celebrating Passover and Pentecost. (The Church to the present celebrates Passover and Pentecost its many perversions notwithstanding.) Never, as well, is the Sabbath brought into **contention**. Although not meant as one of the types of “sabbath days” recognised by their “eating” and “drinking”, the Sabbath **naturally** would have been included – **Paul’s statement would also have concerned the weekly Sabbath**.

Not surprising then that the **prophecy** in Isaiah 66:23 finds its fulfilment in this period of the history of the Christian Church. “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, saith the

Lord”. For the New Church, the New Dispensation was the promised new heavens and earth. “**Which I will make**” for the Christian was “the Christ of God”, his Anointed, His Blessed One. “**This is the Lord’s doing**” (Ps.118:23). “Which I will make will remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your Seed and your Name” – that is Christ! (cf. Gal.3:16) For this reason the Church in Paul’s day feasted even on the New Moon, and he **encourages** the Church in its doings **in the face of the world**. It is quite understandable, the Church’s feasting – its eating and drinking of these feast days. Is not Prophecy **but very recently fulfilled** and has not God’s Word **come true in our own day**? Shall we not celebrate? **Paul** objects not. No, no, he objects not to the feasting, he objects to that “**man**” of the “**world**” **who attacks the Church** and “*judges*” the Church **in its feasting unto the honour of the Lord with grateful hearts**.

8.2.5.1.

Different Viewpoints

I have never before I had my present views formulated read Prof. Bacchiocchi’s views on Colossians 2:16. I say my “present views” because they almost nullify my previous views (and quite stereotype Sabbatarian thinking) expressed in *Die Sondag-Waarheid* of about 15 years ago. So it came to me as no surprise to find **basic differences** between my own and Prof. Bacchiocchi’s explanations in his book, *The Sabbath in the New Testament, Biblical Perspectives*, 1990. By comparing our views the differences are brought into contrasted clarity. (See p.326)

p. 109, “*The Colossian Heresy*”, “*Paul’s reference to the observance of “Sabbaths” in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the “Colossian heresy” refuted by Paul. It is necessary therefor to ascertain first of all the overall nature of the false teachings that threatened to “disqualify” (2:18) the Colossian believers. Were these teachings Mosaic ordinances and can they be identified with the “written document – cheirographon” which God through Christ ‘wiped out ... removed, nailed to the cross’ (2:14)?*

Most commentators define the Colossian heresy as syncretistic teachings which incorporated both Hellenistic and Jewish elements. Such a false teaching had both a theological and practical aspect.

Theologically the Colossian “philosophy” (2:8) was competing with Christ for man’s allegiance. Its source of authority, according to Paul, was human “tradition” (2:8) and its object was to impart true “wisdom” (2:3,23), “knowledge” (2:2-3; 3:10) and to assure access to and participation in the divine “fulness” (2:9-10; 1:19).

To attain divine fulness, Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities (2:10, 15), to “the elements of the universe” (2:8, 20), and to angelic powers (2:15, 18) and to follow ritualistic ascetic

practices (2:11-14, 16, 17, 21-22). Essentially, then, the theological error consisted in interposing inferior mediators in place of the Head Himself, Jesus Christ (2:9-10, 18-19)."

Bacchiocchi's only problem is that he sees this problem as an internal Church matter. "*Observance of "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the "Colossian heresy"*" says he. Bacchiocchi doesn't distinguish in the way Paul does between the different "realms of power", the one consisting of the "Body which is Christ's", its "Head", and the other consisting of "cosmic elements", "philosophy" or "man". (Essentially "any" of these are "one" – *tis*.) Between these **TWO** "powers" rages the vying for the souls of men, "*philosophy*" was *competing with Christ for man's allegiance*". The "*heretical*" onslaught on the Church came from **outside!** The "*heresy*" was that of the "world", and "*observance of "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16*" was **NO** aspect or "*heresy*" of the Church. Paul finds no fault with the Church and has no difficulty in seeing it as Christ's Body. "*The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text (2:16) is expressing not a condemnation but an approbation of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping*", p. 113, par. "*Implicit Approbation*".

8.2.5.2.

Not "Mosaic"?

"*Paul's reference to the observance of "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the "Colossian heresy" refuted by Paul. It is necessary therefore to ascertain first of all the overall nature of the false teachings that threatened to "disqualify" (2:18) the Colossian believers. Were these teachings Mosaic ordinances and can they be identified with the "written document – cheirographon, which God through Christ "wiped out ... removed, nailed to the cross" (2:14)?"*" (p. 109 b)

"*Observance of "Sabbaths ... refuted by Paul" ... "Observance of Sabbaths ... is only one aspect of the "Colossian heresy"?"* No, Prof. Bacchiocchi himself proves this not the case. "*Observance of "Sabbaths"* was no "*aspect of the "Colossian heresy"*" and Paul did not "*refute*" it.

"*False teachings that threatened to "disqualify" (2:18) the Colossian believers*". This statement presupposes that the "*false teachings*" were teachings of "*the Colossian believers*". But "*false teachings*" in fact were teachings of the "**world**" and "**man**" – "man" not presented through the pronoun "**one**" – *ho*, (not "**one** of the believers" as in Romans 14), but "**any**" – *tis / mehdeis*, "any of **man**", *anthropos*, used **seven** times in Colossians.

"Man" is representative **1**, Of the "**world**", *kosmos*, particularly as "**nature / natural religion**": "**the first principles of the world**". "Man"

is representative of the "world" in the sense of "**philosophy**" – used **only once** in the New Testament, Col.2:8, and in my opinion is the outstanding **equivalent of the "world"**, "man", "wisdom", "doctrine", "principle", "principality / rule", "power", "dominion of darkness", *et al.* "World", "man" and "philosophy" are almost identifiable. **2**, Of "tradition" – *paradosis* – the "tradition of **man**" – used by Paul only once in this **negative** sense; **3**, Of "wisdom" – *sophia* (2:23) – usually used for contrasting **God's** and the **world's** "wisdom", here "a **shew** of wisdom"; and **4**, "doctrine" – *didaskalos* (2:22) – here qualified as "**human** teachings". The "**heresy**" – "division", "sect" – **the word does not occur in Colossians**, in Colossus was not the Church that erred, but the Church that was assaulted by "deceitful" "luring away" and "spoiling" of "*believers*" by the "man" of the "world".

The "beguiling" of the "*Colossian believers*" for this reason may not be understood for an "internal" examination they failing it, could be "*disqualified*" by. Like Demas some through their love of the world might have been overcome and might have deserted the Faith. But at Colossus in contrast with the Church in Rome, the Community was "closely knit together" by the "bond of perfectness", "love". Look at them how they use every possible occasion for and occasion of worshipping, in festive spirit to celebrate the reconciliation and peace Christ has obtained for them! And they were privileged to have Paul as their leader, be it in absence and in presentation in spirit and Letter only.

"*Most commentators define the Colossian heresy as syncretistic teachings which incorporated both Hellenistic and Jewish elements.*" (p.109 c)

"*Most commentators*" may be right in "*defining the Colossian heresy*", but not as the heresy of "the Body which is Christ's". The "*syncretistic teachings which incorporated both Hellenistic and Jewish elements*" were that of the world as that "principality and power" – 2:15, opposing the "principality and power" – 2:10, of Christ's Church. To see **only** Satan as the adversary supposed in Colossians is to underestimate the "world" and its "domain" / "dominion" of "wisdom" and "philosophy". Two "worlds", two "**realms**" of "**power**" and "**rule**" face each other in Colossians. Paul uses the same words to describe them, "rule" / "principality" and "power". And both consist of the body and the head, and its charter or constitution of "knowledge and wisdom". The Church stands for the Body with Christ its Head and "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9), "in Whom ye are complete" (2:10) and have "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3). The "world" stands for the body of "men" and its secret head, Satan (not mentioned but doubtless supposed), and its charter or constitution of "philosophy", a "shew of wisdom" and "traditions of men". The "*syncretistic teaching*"

should be looked for **not** in the **Church**, but in the **world**, and the “heresy” or dividing factor of false teachings, **also**.

8.2.5.3.

The “Heresy”, “Essentially”

This conclusion agrees with Prof. Bacchiocchi’s statement, *“Theologically, the Colossian “philosophy” (2:8) was competing with Christ for man’s allegiance. Its source of authority, according to Paul, was human “tradition” (2:8) and its object was to impart true “wisdom” (2:3, 23), “knowledge” (2:2-3; 3:10) and to assure access to and participation in the divine “fulness” (2:9-10; 1:19). To attain divine fulness, Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities (2:10, 15), to “the elements of the universe” (2:8, 20), and the angelic powers (2:11-14, 16, 17, 21-22). Essentially, then, the theological error consisted in interpreting inferior mediators in place of the Head Himself, Jesus Christ (2:9-10, 18-19).”* (p. 109 d, e)

“*Interpreting inferior mediators in place of the Head ...*”? What is this? “*Colossian philosophy*”, “*cosmic principalities*”, “*human tradition*”, the “*dominion*” where “*Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities*”? No, although **both** were earthly – communities of “**man**”, the Church and these “*dominions*” were **opposing realms**, the one of verse **10**, the **Church**, and the other of verse **15**, the **world**.

“*The practical outcome of the theological speculations of the Colossian heretics was their insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism. These consisted in putting off the body of flesh” (2:11 – apparently meaning withdrawal from the world); rigorous treatment of the body (2:23); prohibition to either taste or touch certain kinds of foods and beverages (2:16, 21), and careful observance of sacred days and seasons – festival, new moon, Sabbath (2:16).*” (p.109 / 110 a)

Prof. Bacchiocchi includes **Church** practices with the practices of the “**philosophy**” of the “**world**”. “*Careful observance of sacred days and seasons*”, says he, was one “*theological speculation*” among others of “*strict asceticism and ritualism*”. He makes of the **Church**-“*practices*” some “*syncretistic ideology*”. If Paul meant “*careful observance of sacred days and seasons – festival, new moon, Sabbath*” to be “*only one aspect of the Colossian heresy*” then as clear as day he “*refuted*” “*observance of sacred days*”. Then like the world, the **Church** stands in the dock and is God “*making a shew*” of the **Church**! If what Prof. Bacchiocchi says is true, then Paul as every Christian who in Colossus and in Rome at least, “*observed*” these “*feasts*” and “*days*” were guilty of “*heresy*” to the degree of treason against the Church. For “*heresy*” means to be “*beguiled of your reward*”, “*spoiled*” of the “*inheritance*”, “**dissected**” (from *hairetidzoh*) from the Body and Head. “**Not holding to the Head**” -

“*being dissected from*” it, means to cut off “*nourishment*”, to cut off every “*joint and bands*” even “**cut**” “**the bond** of perfectness, love”! Now this exactly Paul in **no** way **accuses** the Church of, nor **excuses** the Church for, **but protects and defends it against!** **How could Paul say, “Let no man judge you”, if “in eating and drinking and in respect of feasts, new moons and sabbath days” “you” are guilty of “heresy”?**

8.2.5.4.

Acquitted Or Subjected?

Colossians 2:16 ... The two **foregoing verses** portray Christ as the Conciliator, actually as the Propitiatory, the Victor over the prosecutor and all his “*rule and power*”. The “*practical outcome*” of this in all would be that **the Church is acquitted and found guiltless of any offence**. Its actions and convictions “*in regard to food, drink, feasts, months, sabbaths*” **may not be judged**. It needs no excuse or explanation to “**any man**” - least of all to the “*conceited*” “*false teachers*” and self-appointed “*judges*” of the Body **that is Christ’s!**

But, says Prof. Bacchiocchi, “*The practical outcome of the theological speculations of the Colossian heretics was their insistence on ... and careful observance of sacred days and seasons – festival, new moon, Sabbath (2:16)*”. (Emphasis CGE.) “*Observance*” of the “*Sabbath*” was “*the practical outcome*” “*of the theological speculations of the Colossian heretics*” – **unambiguously!** If that were true, Paul denounces the **Sabbath**, Sabbath-keeping and the **keepers** of the Sabbath Day. Then, what Luther said, is not “*totally wrong*”, but “*totally*” true and **correct**, that “*here Paul abolished the Sabbath by name and called it a bygone shadow*”! And may we as well give up any further thought on the matter of the validity of the Sabbath for the Christian Church.

Prof. Bacchiocchi, after this **fatal** remark, continues, “*Christians presumably were led to believe that by submitting to these ascetic practices, they were not surrendering their faith in Christ, but rather they were receiving added protection and were assured of full access to the divine fulness.*” (110 b, a)

“*Submitting to*”, “*these ascetic practices*”: “**These consisted in**”: “*putting off the body of flesh ... careful observance of ... (the) Sabbath*”. (p. 109 / 110 a) **Prof. Bacchiocchi groups** the “*Sabbath*” under “*these ascetic practices*” and assesses observance of the Sabbath as “*submitting to*”, “*ascetic practice*”, “*Christians presumably were led to believe that by submitting to (the) Sabbath*”, they were “*submitting to*” “*the theological speculations of the Colossian heretics*” and “*their insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism*” - one cannot help to conclude. (But which I am sure, or hope, Prof. Bacchiocchi didn’t mean to say because only a Jesuit could.)

“*The Colossian heretics*” by their “*theological speculations*” and “*their insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism*” **tried** to “beguile” or “*lead*” the Church “*to believe*”. And when they **failed** to, they **judged** Christ’s Body. They faced an effective practical **obstacle** to their efforts in the Church’s ongoing use “in respect of eating and drinking – of feasts, of new moons and of sabbath days”. These things seem to have **kept the believers with their feet on the earth**, enabling them to easily recognise the hoax of “philosophy’s” high pretences. Their Old Testament foundation was laid solidly. It caused the philosophers to rage and foam judgement on the Church.

If the Church’s keeping of the Sabbath had been in accordance with the “*speculations of the heretics*”, Paul in all his life would not have “warned” “any man” not to judge the Church in **such** a practice. He would himself have judged and denounced it flatly. Paul’s **very** “*warning*”, “Let no man judge you pertaining eating or drinking or feasting” comes as a “*warning*” to the believer – **not, not to** “*submit to the ascetic practices hinted at in verse 20*”. It comes as a warning to the Church **not to let the ascetics intimidate** or even **implicate** them. **This imperative is not against asceticism but against the ascetics – not against “practices” but against “principalities and powers”**. Asceticism as the “philosophy of the world” and “**the power of darkness**” and “**man**”, opposes **Christ** represented in his “**Body**” the Church.

8.2.5.5.

No Compromise

For Paul **there clearly was no compromise to bargain** between the accuser - the “world” and its “philosophy”, and the defendant - the Church. (At Rome he could attempt a compromise because the issue was an internal, “Church”-issue.) The danger from the “world” / “philosophy” constantly lurked and the open attacks were constantly wielded against the Body of Christ. Just as today the Church for no second can dodge the world. It is not to say the world triumphed and Christ’s body was

“dissected” and “contaminated” (“spoiled”) by the “*heresy*” of the “man” of the “world” **successfully!** It is not to say that whatever Paul in the context of this constant battle between the Christian and the “deceitfulness of the world” mentions as the “*practice*” of the Church, is the “*Colossian heresy*”. On the contrary, Paul concludes just the opposite, “Having **spoiled** principalities and powers (of the world) He **made a shew of them** openly, **triumphing over them** in it” – that is, in **Christ’s atoning death on the cross**. But “in it” must also be understood as meaning “**in the Church**”, his “**Body**”. Christ triumphed “over them” – the world, as He triumphed “in it” – His Body, not only “**in His flesh** through death”, 1:22, but **in “us”** His Body the Church. “Because you also indeed ... **hath He quickened together with Him**, having forgiven

you all trespasses”, 2:13. **This**, the “growth” Paul had in mind, “the coming things” he envisioned and identified for being “the Body that is Christ’s”!

The Church **neither** was to be “**forgiven**” as if for its sins for “eating, drinking or feasting”, **nor** was it to be **judged** “in respect of” it. The Church “in eating or in drinking, or in respect of feasts, new moons and sabbath days”, was “**unblameable**” and was **not brought under judgement** for it either by Paul or by God. **But the “world” waited** not to “judge” the Church “in respect of it”. The Church **participated in no wise** in the “*Colossian heresy*”, **but contrary to it** worshipped its Lord honourably and undaunted – **Paul their champion in the face of a heretic world!** In these **Old Testament practices**, Christians in fact *were not surrendering their faith in Christ but rather they were receiving added protection from Paul and were assured of full access to the divine fullness IN CHRIST!* They had no difficulty in understanding that “these things were (but) a shadow of what awaits the Body that is Christ’s”, namely, Victory! Fullness! Glory! Why? **Because nobody could judge them in it!** They are “found in Him”, **openly showing it** as Christ made an open show of victory to the world, eating, drinking, feasting, resting *to the honour of the Lord and in gratefulness to God.*

8.2.5.6.

Verdict: Not Guilty!

Prof. Bacchiocchi: “*This bare outline suffices to show that the Sabbath is mentioned not in the context of a direct discussion on the nature of the law, but rather in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian “philosophers”*”. (p. 110, b. See also p. 109, c)

“Let no one judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of feasts” – the **Church** is found “not guilty” in terms of “*the law*”. **In this sense Paul is judge** of the case. He acquits his people: “*Beloved, continue freely. I denounce this menacing perpetrator, Leave my people in peace!*” “Meat, drink, feasts” “*as such*” are judged and found **not** against the law. The **Sabbath** or anything “*practised*” by the Church is judged and found **not** against the law. The Church **positively** “*practices*” within the scope of the law; the “*practices*” are “**lawful**” – although in the light of Paul’s explanation just after, considered **comparatively insignificant against the stature Christ’s Body still has to acquire**. The **accuser** who also acts prosecutor and judge, “man” of “philosophy”, is **shamed and condemned**. And the **Church** is **vindicated**. (See Par. 8.2.2.5.12.)

8.2.5.7.

“Approbation or Condemnation of Sabbath-keeping?” (p. 112)

Some of the words more or less synonymous with the word “approbation” are, “approval”, “acknowledgement”, “sanction”, “appreciation”. Paul shows exactly such an attitude towards the Church’s “practice” “in eating and drinking, in respect of feasts, new moons and sabbaths”. He, as attorney of defence for the Church, places himself between the Church and its assailant, daring “any man” to “judge” Christ’s Body “in respect” of “these things” – despite the fact “it is (but) a shadow” compared to “the full growth” “to come” “of the Body which is Christ’s”.

“In the context of”

“The Sabbath is mentioned ... in the context of ... syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi assumes “the Sabbath is mentioned”. If “the Sabbath is mentioned in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’” then the **Sabbath** is considered a, or “only one aspect”, of “syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’” – which, I am sure, Prof. Bacchiocchi would agree, **it is not**, even though that is what he says here. To place the Sabbath in the “context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’” is to have it concocted in the farrago of “syncretistic beliefs and practices”. Paul does **not** mention the Sabbath in any relation but of **contrast** with such things, **not** as “only one aspect of the ‘Colossian heresy’”, but as an “**unblameable, unprovable**” “practice” not of “spoiled” and “beguiled” Colossians, but of “**you**” who are found “**in Him**” – the “Body which is **Christ’s!**”

This “practice” of supposed (and acknowledged) observance of the Sabbath in fact, **verse 16 in between verses 15 and 17**, is mentioned **right in contextual relation of Christ’s triumph, and not by any means** “in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian philosophers”. These **Church practices of Old Testament beliefs and New Testament Faith**, is **poised with** the triumphant glory of **Christ** in dying and rising from the ultimate test to standards,

death. That is its **basis** – contextually. And these **Church practices** of Old Testament *beliefs* and New Testament Faith, is **poised with** the triumphant glory of **Christ** in his Body the Church. That is its **superstructure** – contextually. And the “inflated / puffed up” boasting of the “**fleshly mind**” of “worldly” “philosophy”, on “dietary practices” and “dietary taboos” **only in verse 20’s last half** appears “in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian philosophers”.

8.2.5.8.

A Matter of Belonging

“The Sabbath: A Bygone Shadow? Having refuted the theological speculations of the Colossian false teachers by reaffirming the supremacy of Christ and the fulness of His redemption (2:8-15), Paul turns to some practical aspects of their religious practices, saying: “Therefore, let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (2:16-17). (p.112 a)

“Paul turns to some practical aspects of their religious practices”, says Prof. Bacchiocchi. To “their religious practices”, that is, to the religious practices “of the Colossian false teachers”. And he quotes “food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath”. Now if food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath were “religious practices” “of the Colossian false teachers”, how could Paul say, “Let no one pass judgement on you” therein? Paul could not. **Unless** he regarded these “Colossian false teachers” as the **Church** and saw “food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath” as a “**heresy**” of the **Christian Community**.

But Paul considered these “Colossian false teachers” a **threat** to the Church and **not** as the Church itself. The “false teachers” – not Paul, **objected** to the food and the feasts. **Paul retaliated against** the “false teachers”, admonishing the **Congregation**, “Don’t let any one (“Colossian false teachers”) judge you (the Church) in foods and feasts”. **‘If they say**, “Touch not! Taste not! Treat not!” *Don’t mind them! You don’t belong to them; you are the Body which is Christ’s! Let no man therefore judge you, and eat, drink, feast! Be merry, you are in Him and tomorrow may well not die, but increase with the increase of God whereas their living wastes itself being typical of man’s rock hard and ice cold doctrines!*”

What were the “practical aspects of their religious practices”, and **who** were “they”? Were “they” the Church – inclusive of both “believers” and “false teachers”, or were “they” the **Church** as the “rule and power” of which Christ is Head, the Church, or were “they” as the “rule and power” of the “**world**” of which “man” and “philosophy” is the head? The Sabbath is **not** known in Colossians as a *practical aspect of syncretistic or ascetic religious practices how so ever*. The Sabbath by nature flies in the face of “philosophy” – the “philosophy” of **asceticism**, moreover.

8.2.5.9.1.

Paul’s Chain of Thought

Paul doesn’t “turn” from one thing to a next **unrelated** thing. He **continues**, welding what he has said before with what he is

going to say after together. He doesn't only use connective auxiliaries like the words "therefore" and "then" for the purpose, but the concepts as such are progressively dependent. *'Because Christ vanquished the enemy* (verse 15), *therefore use your freedom!* (verse 16), *but keep in view the ultimate goal* (verse 17), *and don't be robbed of it!* (verse 18). *Keep constant guard against the deceitful and vainglorious philosophy of the world while you fully enjoy all wisdom and all salvation, growing with the increase of God as his Church into the Head and full stature of Christ* (verse 19)!"

8.2.5.9.2.

Luther's Chain of Thought

(See Part 3/4, Par. 7.6, p. 403.) Luther claimed, quotes Bacchiocchi (We follow the order of Prof. Bacchiocchi's book.), "Here Paul abolished the Sabbath by name and called it a bygone shadow because the body, which is Christ himself, has come." (p. 112, b)

If Paul, as Luther claims, "abolished the Sabbath by name" why does he not "abolish" it **by word**, but instead warns, "Let no man judge, you, in respect of ... sabbaths?" If the Sabbath were "abolished" in Paul's statement, then "the Sabbath" should appear in the Accusative as the **direct** object of the verb. It would also require a direct subject, "I, Paul, abolish the Sabbath", or, "You abolish the Sabbath!", or, "God abolished the Sabbath". But now the Sabbath - or rather "sabbath days", are involved very **remotely**. **1**, Let not any man judge **it the Church** (not the Sabbath).

2, Let not any man judge it the Church, **concerning eating or drinking**. **3**, Let not any man judge it the Church, concerning eating or drinking **belonging to** sabbath days. **4**, Only now "sabbath days" come into focus, while it should be the direct object of the verb in order to be "abolished by name". But **even here** "the Sabbath by name" is not the object or the subject treated on in this Scripture, but "sabbath days" **to which "belong"** "eating" and "drinking". Which makes these "sabbath days" **different in kind** "sabbaths" than the **one** known "**by name**" as "**The Sabbath**".

If then, Paul "abolished" anything, he "abolished" "**eating**" and "**drinking**" (being so near the verb of action, **allegedly**, "abolished"), and **that**, of the food and drink belonging to these feasts **and food and drink not even** belonging to these feasts. Paul would be siding with the "world" and would plead for asceticism!

Luther further alleges that Paul "called it (the Sabbath) a bygone shadow". As shown above, Paul does not call the Sabbath **anything**. He says, "**these things** are a shadow", "these things" being **the practices of the Church collectively** as he has stipulated just before. And those things, to say it again, were, **directly**, "**eating**" and

"**drinking**", and, only **indirectly**, the "feasts" and the "sabbath days" which the "food" and "drink" were connected with. And, to say it again, the Sabbath **might** be appreciated as a "shadow" or even be sorted with the **type** of "sabbaths" Paul had in mind, but strictly speaking, **was** not in his mind as it **is** not of the same kind of "sabbaths" he mentions "by name".

Then Luther alleges that the "shadow" was "a bygone shadow". By this Luther means the Sabbath had been a "shadow" – a "symbol" of things that had to come and **had had** come. Which is perfectly true of both the "feast"-type of "sabbaths" that Paul mentions, and the weekly Sabbath which he does not mention. And thank you, Luther, for the admission. Were it but the Sunday's privilege for the sake of your argument! But again as has been shown in various considerations above, the Sabbath's fulfilment meant its ultimate **confirmation** by the blessing and sanctification it received through Christ. Christ's fulfilment of the Sabbath meant its true creation and beginning as the Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace. But that is not the point here. Paul literally does not write "a bygone shadow" in the Past Perfect tense or sense. He writes, "these things **are** – *est in*, Present Continues Tense and sense – "a shadow", and they are a shadow "**of near** (- in Paul's day soon coming) **things**!"

Luther further **errs**, stating, "the body, which is Christ himself, has come." The "body" is "Christ's", is that "**of Christ**" – *tau Xristou*. "Christ himself", as Paul here metaphorically presents Him, is the "**Head**" – **not** the "body". "The **Head, even Christ**", Eph.4:15. "**We are members of one another ... members of his body**" – yea, "**Ye are the body of Christ**", Ephesians 4:25, 5:30 and 1Cor.12:27. The "Body" Paul here speaks of is Christ's **Church**, at this stage in its history still infantile and still has to "**grow with the growth of God**", 2:18. "That we may **grow up** in all things into Him which is the Head, even Christ", Eph.4:15. ("Paul planted, Barnabas watered, but God caused to **grow**.") This simple truth about the **age** of the Church here pertinent in Paul's Letter, is indicative of what kind of "sabbaths" he writes. They were those "sabbaths" that indicated what stature the **Body** or **Church** of Christ **would** still reach, namely, "**unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**", Eph.4:13.

Luther finally errs in saying, "the body ... has come". At the point in time Paul wrote his Letter to the Colossians the "body" has not as yet reached full realisation. The Body, then, "**has**" not come but "was coming", was "near" and "nearing". The Body the new creation of God was developing still, had not **reached** maturity, so to speak. And this is **remarkable** contextually, since the First Church immediately and not through a slow process, **shod its heathen religious "principles of the**

world” – *stoicheia tou kosmou*, while even the Gentile converts - took **more time** to form a clear distinction between the **Old Testament** (Jewish) religion and the Christian Faith. (We say this here because this perspective will again come to the fore when we shall study Galatians 4:10.)

8.2.5.10.1.

Whom Does Paul “Warn”?

“To test the validity of this traditional interpretation (Luther’s above), we will consider the following questions: (1) Is Paul warning the Colossians against the practices of “eating, drinking, festival, new moon, and Sabbath” as such or against those false teachers who were imposing “regulations” on the manner of observing these practices? (2) What is the nature of the “regulations”? Are they derived from Mosaic prescriptions or from a syncretistic ideology? (p. 112 c)

“Is Paul warning the Colossians?” Paul implicitly and directly warns the assailants, the “beguilers” (18), the “spoilers” (8), the “subjectors” (20) and pretending “judges” – verse 16! He warns **them**, as he **also** warns the **Church** about **them**, **“Let no man therefore judge you!”** Paul warns these “judges”, **“By ‘no man’ I mean you, you beguilers of the members of the Body of Christ!”** Paul **does** have the “*false teachers*” in mind, and means **them** with the pronoun, **“no man / no one” – tis**. He as well could have said, “Let no **false teachers** judge you ...”, virtually **“warning”** the “*false teachers*” while warning the Church concerning them.

“False teachers” were not “believers”. They were **“any man”** of the **“world”**. Paul did not warn the Church against the **Church** or brother against brother (as in Rome’s Church). He warned the Church against the **world** - in this text **as in the whole Epistle**. *“False teachers”* did not **“prescribe”**^{OAB} or enforce **“manner”**. They **protested** against **“manner”** as well as against believers in **“practice”** enjoying and feasting **“in meat”** and **“in drink”**, **“in respect of feasts, new moons, and sabbath days”**. The *“false teachers”* **envied** the Christian Body its **freedom** and enjoyment in **“manner”**, that is, exactly in **“practice”**, by food and by feast of their **full and finished** salvation **“in Him”**. They **for this very reason** tried to “beguile” the Church of its “reward”.

8.2.5.10.2.

“Manner” Or “Man”

Does Paul **“warn”**, ‘Don’t let false teachers **impose “regulations”** on the **manner** you observe these practices, **“food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath”**?’ Indeed so! The issue was over **“the manner of observing”** as much as over **“the five mentioned practices ... as such”**. **There virtually is no difference** between **“manner”**, **“practice”** and **“... sabbath ... as such”**. **The fact that the Church ate and drank in the**

manner of life (feast), new moons and rests (sabbaths) went against the grain of the “false teachers” of the “philosophy” of asceticism – the “wisdom” of the “world”. “Wherefor if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world ...” (2:20) be sure to excite its jealousy and hatred! The “world’s” motives and attitude, even its *mannerisms* are implied as the **antagonist** of the **Christian** motive, attitude and “manner”. But “Don’t let yourselves be judged!”

Does Paul warn, “Don’t let anyone tell you **to observe**” these **“practices”**? No. But he surely means, “Don’t let anyone tell you **not** to observe” these **“practices”**! He **writes exactly what he means** and that indicates, indeed **proves** the **observance** of these **“practices”** and Paul’s **condoning** these **“practices”**. Paul’s imperative supposes the **actuality** of **“eating, drinking** regarding feasts” and **encourages** its observance. Paul’s imperative supposes the **“manner”** of the observance of these practices, even the Christian’s freedom, peace, joy and fullness – **“in Christ”**. See above, Par. 8.2.2.1.5.3.

8.2.5.11.

“Manner” Or Affectation?

Paul said, yes, **wrote**, **“judge”**, and **meant** what **that** word means and what **that** word may imply . . . **this** word and no other! This word and its meaning allows no other word to be simply taken for granted and have the meaning of everything changed unrecognisable. This word “judge” – *krinoh*, is primarily used for **legal** decision **because its meaning is exact, “dividing”** - between right and wrong. But it also may mean to be **“puffed up”**, to be full of **self-esteem**. If Paul writes “judge” he does not mean, **“prescribe (to not observe)”** or **“adjust (in manner of observance)”**. He means “just”, “judged”! And because he says, **“judged”**, the matter is “being **judged** in food or drink”. It’s just fine as far as Paul is concerned but not good enough for the vainglorious ascetic philosophers! The matter is being **judged** in respect of food or drink of feasts, is being **judged** in respect of food or drink of new moons, is being **judged** in respect of food or drink of sabbath days”. And Paul **assures** the Colossian Christians, **“Let no man who thinks himself high and mighty judge or criticise you in food or in drink!”**

The *“false teachers”* were **outside** the Church and **are not permitted** any say on matters of the **Church** for the very reason of their “wisdom” and “philosophy”! They might perhaps reckon that **they** must **“impose ‘regulations’**” on the Church **“on how to observe these practices in order to achieve ‘rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body (2:23)’”** – **but are mistaken!** For us to suppose that **“they”** – “any man”, could **“judge you”** – the Church, is to suppose **reality** and just this, **their** judgement on the **Church** proves the “man” of the

“world’s” **audacity!** Paul “warns” these “wise” of the “world”, because they, “judge” the **Church**.

The Church or its “practices” is not judged by Paul but condoned and dared.

8.2.5.12.

Source of Origin

“What is the nature of the “regulations”? Are they derived from Mosaic prescriptions or from a syncretistic ideology?”

The “regulations” the “false teachers were imposing” “derived from ... a syncretistic ideology”. They **could** not have “derived from Mosaic prescriptions” because **they were directly opposed** to the “Mosaic prescriptions” on “practices of ‘eating, drinking, festival, new moon, and sabbath’ as such” still celebrated by the Christian Church. They also **could** not have derived from **Christian**, ecclesiastic prescription because they were directly opposed to the **spirit** of these “practices of ‘eating, drinking, festival, new moon, and sabbath’ – even the spirit of **freedom!**

“Warning Against False Teachers”. The statement “Therefore, let no one pass judgement on you ...” has been traditionally interpreted as a warning from Paul against the five mentioned practices. This interpretation is totally wrong because in this passage Paul is warning the Colossians not against the observances of these practices as such, but against ‘any one’ (tis) who passes judgement on how to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times.” (p. 112,d)

Colossians 2:16 “traditionally interpreted as a warning from Paul against the five mentioned practices ... is totally wrong”. Nevertheless, according to Prof. Bacchiocchi, *interpreted as judgement on how to eat etc*, this interpretation should be totally **correct**. Thus interpreted Paul’s “warning” is totally **void**.

Of concern is **NOT HOW to eat, HOW to drink, and HOW to observe sacred times – except in free Christian spirit!** Of concern is **NOT HOW to eat, HOW to drink, and HOW to observe sacred times – which gives the “false teachers” – against whom Paul is warning the Colossians** an interest and say in matters of the Church. Concern about “how” – “according to the principles of the world and not according to Christ”, 2:11, exactly is what Paul warns **against**. **Of concern is that any one (tis) who in respect of food etc. may get a foothold, might interfere, influence, dissuade, and eventually “judge YOU” the “Colossian believers”. Centrally it is a matter of the “man”, the “power and rule” of the “world” or “philosophy”, over against “you” the Body of Christ and of Christ’s “power and rule”.**

Paul does not lose grip on reality. The matter of fact of the situation is *the observances of these practices as such*, and in effect and

in fact Paul warns ‘**any one**’ – *tis, who passes judgement ... against ... YOU*. Paul thereby warns “**any one**” not to **judge** the **Church**. He at the same time thereby actually enjoins the **Church**, not to **be** judged. Paul in effect and in fact does not judge the **Church**, but the **judges** judge the Church, the “false teachers” the “man”, “any one”, the “world”. (See above p. 34, Par. 8.2.2.5.6.)

The “Colossian heresy” existed **outside** Christ’s Body and the foods and feasts had **no** part in it but on the contrary were the focal point of the “philosophical” **attack** on the Church as the “world’s” opposition.

In verses 16 and 18 Paul implies and addresses the “world” while addressing the Church. In verse 17 – that lies in between Paul’s two imperatives – he addresses the Church only. The Church must only **maintain the right perspective** on the nature of “these things” so the target of the enemy’s attack! This verse may even be taken for an imperative as well, “Remember, these things are only a shadow of what the Church should be and should become!” *“Being so severely pushed at, these things may in themselves seem to be the purpose and the fullness of your faith. But they actually are only temporary, only passing over the ground like a shadow as the Body moves on towards its real goal and purpose, the full stature of the Body of Christ – the real goal and purpose, to be found “in Him” completely. Strive to be endowed with Jesus Christ, putting off the old man of sin and putting on the New Man of righteousness.”*

8.2.5.13.

Paul Not the Judge

Prof. Bacchiocchi supplies his most illumined observation in confirmation of this conclusion, *“Note should be taken of the fact that the Judge who passes judgement is not Paul but Colossian false teachers ...”*. (p. 112, e) *“Paul is warning the Colossians not against the observances of these practices as such, but against ‘any one’ (tis) who passes judgement ...” full stop!* With his “warning” Paul has **these men** in the eye while addressing the Church.

What does Paul warn the “Colossian false teachers” not to do? **Not to judge the Church!** **Not** what Prof. Bacchiocchi alleges, namely to “impose” ‘regulations’ **on how to observe these practices** (*to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times*)”, “**on how to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times**”.

Paul underlines the fact that **he** is called to “minister”, 1:23, this “nourishment” from the Head to the Body, 2:19. He reminds the Body that “*these things, the food, the drink, the feasting, are but a shadow of the nearing reality which will belong to Christ and now already belongs to Christ*” – “when **Christ** will be **all in all**.” (3:11, Eph.1:23) To translate “these things” with “substance” is acceptable. It should only **not**

be rendered “the substance **is Christ**” because that would **identify the Church with Christ**. The “substance” as the reached goal of the full stature of Christ, is the Church as having reached its potential “in Christ” as its Representative.

8.2.5.14.

The Purpose of Eating, Drinking, Feasting

Compare Par. 8.2.2.1.3.1 above.

What is the **purpose** of the Church’s observance of “these practices”, “to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times”? The **Church** decides its purpose, **not** the “false teachers”. And Paul **supports** the Church in it. But the **purpose**? The purpose of “these practices” **exists in itself**. The Church **ate** and the Church **drank** and the Church **feasted**, and **that fulfilled its aim and purpose!** Yes, the Church did exactly “these things” as “**a shadow of what is coming**”. That is **Paul’s definition of its purpose!** Paul’s “judgement” on the meaning and purpose of the “practices” – the purpose “**in respect of**” foods and drink and feasts, *i.e.*, “as far as” foods and drink and feasts are “concerned” – **is, that the Church does it in view of the fact that it belongs to Christ**. The practices are the activity of the Church. That is how the Church lives. ‘*Let no man judge you therein ... but remember, that is not where things end. Look ahead and behold God’s ideal with and in and for you his Kingdom, in Him, Christ.*’ The Church being that **Body** that is Christ’s, observes these practices **the eye on its growth in Christ**. The Church “**increasing with the increase of God**” “through nourishment ministered” “**from the Head**” – and **not** from the **food or drink or feasts**. It “**grows up / increases**”, “**into Him ... which is the Head**”, Eph.4:15.

These things are no purpose in itself. That exactly is the “**deceit**” of the “**doctrine of man**” – to make of eating and drinking – **or of the not eating and not drinking**, the kingdom or ultimate purpose. The “**doctrine of man**” reckons its own wonderful attainment, its own having reached even a state of “angelic worship” and “humility beyond the capacity of the will”, fulfilment and fullness. ‘*But I, Paul, I am telling you that you are complete in Him, and not in your eating, drinking, feasts, new moons, sabbath days (or in your not observing of such things, you ascetics over there!) In Him – in Christ, you have all the fullness of wisdom and knowledge! Christ in you, the hope of glory, the mystery among the Gentiles! So that, is the purpose of your food and drink and feasts and new moons and sabbath days or whatever of your best service and devotion unto the Lord and in thankfulness to God.*’

Thus Paul describes these practices in Romans 14 and thus he reminds the Colossians to do in “whatsoever ye do” – “Do it heartily **as to the Lord**, and **not unto men**”, 3:23.

This Paul makes absolutely clear to the **Church** while he **at the same time also** makes it absolutely clear to the “**world**”: ‘*Don’t play judge of the Church and denounce it in its freedom and joyful unblameability and unproveability in Jesus Christ its Head!*’ Paul allows the Colossians real and complete **freedom**; he allows the “Colossian false teachers” **no** freedom or say in deciding for the Church **either** over “the practice as such” - to be given up or continued, **or** over the “manner” - “how to ... observe sacred times”.

8.2.5.15.

In Defence of the Faith

“*The judge is likely to be the man of ascetic tendencies who objects to the Colossians’ eating and drinking. The most natural way of taking the rest of the passage is not that he also imposes a ritual of feast days, but rather that he objects to certain elements of such observation*”, Prof. Bacchiocchi quoting D.R. De Lacey.

The most natural way of taking the rest of the passage is that Paul objects to certain people who object to such observance. Paul objects not to “certain elements of such observation”, like the “manner”, as explained above. Continues Prof. Bacchiocchi, “Presumably the ‘judge’ wanted the community to observe these practices in a more ascetic way (“severity to the body” – 2:23, 21), to put it crudely, he wanted the Colossian believers to do less feasting and more fasting”. (p.113, a)

Both these authors presume **the Church itself** – be it only a party in the Church – the “imposer” of “certain elements of observation”, namely of a “more ascetic way”. Making the Church the “imposer” implies that Paul reprimands the Church. Then his “warning” is aimed against the **Church**; then Paul’s “warning” is aimed against some **wrong** in the Church - which means Paul defends one “manner” over against another “manner” to observe “sabbath days”, which, in fact, would mean Paul defends a **wrong**. Or, in De Lacey’s words, Paul “objects to certain elements of observation”. Making the Church the “judge” implies that the issue in the Church was **merely** one of certain “**adjustments**” in observance of **wrong** “practices”. That of course **still** implies the observance of “sabbath days”, **but cannot reveal the real problem or the gravity of the situation in the Colossian Church**.

Contextually, whether implied or explicit, there is indication **neither** of a difference over “manner”, nor of a difference as such over the “practices as such” within the Church. Making the Church the “imposer”, **or** the “judge”, implies that the “imposing”, “beguiling”, “principality and power”, is **not** the direct antipode of the Church the “principality and power” of which Christ is the Head, the Firstborn and the Creator, **1:15-16, 18**. But the “imposing” (the ascetic, wise and mighty of the world) **opposed**, the Church – *in toto*. It could wipe out,

“blot out” Christ’s Body if it could. But most nauseous to this miserable power of oppression was **the freedom of Christ’s Church**, the fact that that one people founded and found in that one Man called Jesus Christ was so free, so happy, so joyful and celebrating, and increasing with the increase of God! **What have you to celebrate? Look at us** the really illumined who have the real truth and understanding and knowledge! Look how we inflict the flesh pain and neglect, **proving** our attainment of wisdom and knowledge! Answers Paul on behalf of the Church **in this matter, in direct relation** to both this “worldly principle” and “philosophy”, and Christ’s “triumph over them”: “**Christ** blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us (and inflicted pain and death upon us). **He** took it out of the way, and nailed it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers (of pain and death), **He** made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (in life). Therefore, let no man (of the world), judge **you** (my brethren in Christ) in eating or in drinking, or in respect of (your) feasts, new moons and sabbath days” – let no man judge you in your celebrating of this triumphant Life.

There is no judgement from Paul over the **fact** of sabbath days being observed. There is no judgement from Paul over the **way** sabbath days are observed. There is no judgement from Paul over one **brother** against the other over sabbath days being observed. **There is only this warning from Paul, Let the Church not be judged in its observing sabbath days by this “someone”!** Let the Church not be judged by this wise and arrogant guy, indeed the personification of the “power and rule” “of the world” and “of man”. Paul all along unmistakably identifies this “one” as the **foe** of Christ and of his Body the Church. The matter is an “either or”. Either “perfect in Christ Jesus”, 1:28, or, “spoiled through philosophy”, 2:8. Either free and feasting, or, “subjected and neglecting the body”, 2:20, 23.

Not only two schools of thought, two “**wisdoms**”, oppose one another here, but two “**dominions**”, 1:16, both a “**power and rule**” in its own right, the one a “power and rule” which **Christ is the Head** of, 2:10, 1:11. Christ, “in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” - 1:3, and “in Whom” is “all fulness” - 1:19. The other is the “power and rule” - 2:15, the caricature of the first, the “beguiling”, the one “enticing with words” - 2:4, the one “spoiling through philosophy”, “according to the world’s principles” - 2:8, “the body of the sins of the flesh” - 2:11, “worshipping of angles” - 2:18, “severed from the Head” - 2:19, “moved away from the hope” - 1:23, indeed, the “dominion” of the “**power of darkness**” - **1:13!**

This picture of the “world” over against the “Body which is Christ’s” cannot be compared with the picture in the Church at Rome

where the Church was divided in itself, and where both “parties” followed their own way “in honour of the Lord giving thanks to God”. It cannot be compared even though the Church in Rome sinned so gravely in judging and despising one another. Notwithstanding they honestly meant to serve God and be grateful unto Him. But in Colossus the one “**Power**” follows its own way (in one thing by observing feasts and merrily eating and drinking) in honour of the Lord giving thanks to God. The other “**power**” and all its hosts of “ordinances”, “doctrines” “documents” and what have you, **deny God and his praises, and glory in neglect of body and soul**. Paul admonishes the good Christians of Colossus, ‘*Let no man judge you for having sided with Christ, not even in the least of things, as in eating, or in drinking, or in respect of feasting, new moons or resting and any days you may set apart for the purpose. Don’t, and go your way because in Christ you are really free!*’ Then, in unwritten brackets, Paul just reminds the Colossian Freemen, ‘*Remember these things are only a shadow of what your aim and goal is. Don’t stop here. Don’t make of food and drink God’s Kingdom, because God’s Kingdom, the full stature of it, in substance, is not food and drink, but is Jesus Christ, and you, “in Him”, and, his Holy Spirit operating in you.*’

8.2.5.16.

“Approbation” by Surrender?

“*By warning (the Church) against the right of the false teachers to “pass judgement” on how to observe festivals, Paul is challenging not the validity of the festivals as such but the authority of the false teachers to legislate on the manner of their observance. The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text is expressing not a condemnation but an approbation of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping.*” (p.113, b)

How confused can things get? Prof. Bacchiocchi argues that “Sabbath-keeping” is “included” under “the mentioned practices”. (Prof. Bacchiocchi in this respect differs from the **traditional** Sabbatarian interpretation that the Sabbath is **not** included under “the mentioned practices”.) But Prof. Bacchiocchi qualifies the Sabbath’s inclusion under “the mentioned practices”. On page 110 par. b, he insists that “the Sabbath is mentioned not in the context of a direct discussion on the nature of the (“Mosaic”, or, Fourth Commandment?) law”. Obviously not but nonetheless a meaningless observation. “But”, continues Prof. Bacchiocchi, “the Sabbath is mentioned ... rather in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’.” So by final analysis, “Paul’s reference to the observance of “Sabbaths” in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the ‘Colossian heresy’ refuted by Paul”.

How can Paul “warn” the Christians of Colossus *against the false teachers* if it is “**their right** to pass judgement”? Prof. Bacchiocchi is quite right in that “*Paul is challenging not the validity of the festivals as such but the authority of the false teachers*”. Unfortunately Prof. Bacchiocchi goes off course summarily, saying, “*Paul is challenging the authority of the false teachers to legislate on the manner of their observance*”. (“*Their*” referring to “*the festivals*” or to “*the Colossian believers*” or to the “*false teachers*”?) Paul would **not**, according to Prof. Bacchiocchi, “*challenge the authority of the false teachers to legislate*” – “**their right** to pass judgement”. Paul would **only** “*challenge*” their “*authority to legislate on the manner of their observance*”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi – no one knows how – in the end got it right, “*The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text is expressing not a condemnation but an **approbation** of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping*” – and that is all that matters, really.

“*It is noteworthy that even De Lacey reaches this conclusion, in spite of his view that Paul did not expect Gentile converts to observe the sabbath. He writes: “Here again (Col.2:16), then, it seems that Paul could happily countenance Sabbathkeeping ... However, we interpret the situation, Paul’s statement ‘Let no man pass judgement on you’, indicates that no stringent regulations are to be laid down over the use of the festivals.”*”

In this I find nothing of which can be protested except for its irrelevancy to the issue. The relevant situation, however, should be interpreted, Paul’s statement “Let no man pass judgement on you ...”, indicates that Paul – **at that point in time of the history of the Church** – **dismisses worldly or philosophic** (syncretistic) **prohibition** of the festivals and **condones** the festivals **in the face of the adversary** of the Body the Church. Christians are the Freemen of Christ!

8.2.5.17.

“Regulated”, Or, Free Reign?

“*What is the nature of the ‘regulations’ promoted by the false teachers regarding the way to eat ...?*” (113 bottom)

In the light of the fact Prof. Bacchiocchi mentions right opposite on the left hand bottom page 112, “*the fact that the judge who passes judgement is not Paul but Colossian false teachers who impose regulations*”, it is **unnecessary** and **superfluous** to consider this question. It is unnecessary and superfluous because it has been shown beyond a doubt I trust that the “*Colossian false teachers*” are, **identical**, the “any”, the *tis*, the “world” of “philosophy” – the “philosophy” of asceticism! And it has been shown I trust without a doubt that these “philosophers” desired no **adjustments** or substitutes for the “*festivals*” “*as such*”, as to the “*manner*” or as to kind. They had in view but one objective, to **lure**

away from the Body and Head. They desired to “**dissect**” – to “heresify”, those who exactly by these “*festivals*” illustrated their allegiance to the **Body** that is Christ’s, and, who in their union and “bond” with the **Head** which is Christ Himself, **were** that Body that is Christ’s. Not surprising, Prof. Bacchiocchi could not help to notice the obvious absence of an explanation of the “*nature of the ‘regulations’*”. “*Regretfully*” (sic.), says he, “*Paul gives us only few hints*”. I daresay he gives none. Where Paul “*mentions ... ‘self-abasement and worship of angels’ ‘rigor of devotion ... severity to the body’ (2:18, 23) and that they taught: ‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ (2:21) ... the catch phrases indicate*” NOT “*the regulations*” on the “*observance of the festivals*”, but the “philosophy”, the “world” and its “principles”, and the “doctrines of man”. They all indicate **the foe of Christ and of his Body** and the things by which it attempts inroads into the Church in order to **snatch out** of the Church and to **carry away** to “philosophy” any not thoroughly “**rooted and built up in Him, established in faith**”. Immediately after having said, “... triumphing over them in it”, Paul warns, “Let no man judge you in food ... feasting ...!” It like a refrain emphasises **what the Church enjoys in Christ** and in his fullness and satisfaction. Don’t let the world spoil and deprive you of it!

8.2.5.18.

No Mixture

“*These catch phrases (Touch not! ...) indicate that the regulations did not derive from the Levitical law since nowhere does the latter contemplate such an ascetic program*”. 114 ba)

Prof. Bacchiocchi connects the fetish peculiarities of **pretenders** with the free enjoyment of the **righteous**, and imagines a resultant mixture or “*syncretism*”. **Nowhere**, just as the Levitical Law “*nowhere contemplates an ascetic program*”, does Paul contemplate “*regulations*” or “*an ascetic program*” “**with regard to meat, drink, feasts ...**”. Very clearly in fact, Paul **indicates**, quite **literally**, as to where the “*festivals*” “*derive from*”. The meats and the feasts are **mutually dependant** aspects of “*Levitical law*”. Paul addresses the Church “in (the matter of) **meats** (and) **drink**”, in fact “in respect of the eating (and) drinking of **feasts**, of **new moons** and of **sabbath days**”. “**Belonging to**” – Genitive! Certainly these are festal occasions “**to which pertains foods and drink**”. That **identifies** and **limits** the “*matters*” as “**these things**” of “*Levitical law*”. Also, as Prof. Bacchiocchi points out himself, “*The nomenclature of the festivals is Jewish*” that is, it is the Old Testament **collective name** for these Old Testament “*practices*”. See Scriptures given above. Having established the “nature” of the relevant “sabbaths”, it naturally follows that “*since the Levitical law nowhere contemplates an ascetic program*” “in respect of” the “sabbaths”, they

would not suite any “*ascetic regulations*”. The Sabbaths, on the contrary, would be most **undesired** in any “*ascetic program*” and consequently would directly and sternly be **opposed** by the “*false teachers*” and be **irreconcilable** with **their** ascetic “philosophy”.

8.2.5.19.

Broader Context

The “sabbaths” and “new moons” and “feasts” of Colossians 2:16 are **in the broader context** the **free** opposites of the **fetishes** of verses 21-22. Although “these things” “in respect of” which “no man should judge you” “**are but a shadow**”, they remain, because they “are” – Present ordinary and not Perfect but Continuous (*estin*). And although they are but a shadow, they nonetheless are a shadow “of the body **that is Christ’s**”. They are not of “the doctrines and falsities of man” by which “man” of the “world” all along “beguiles” the Church “not to hold to the Head”. The “heretic” is a man of one ambition, to **sever**. In Colossus he used all his resources of “power”, “philosophy”, “sophistry” etc. to cause to “let go” the Body the Church from “*the Head from which the whole Body by joints and bands is administered nourishment and through which it gets strong and grows with the growth God gives.*”

This is the “shadow” of “these things” the “sabbaths” were of a **kind**. From this – not accidentally, but consequently, Paul infers, “Wherefor, **if ye be dead with Christ** *If it is true that Christ hath quickened you together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses (verse 13), the implication is singly positive, brethren, that, if what has thus far been discussed are applicable to you, if ye be dead with Christ, then it may justly be concluded that you are a member of the Body*”. “If therefore then ye be dead with Christ ...”, it follows, not accidentally but consequently, that you are dead “from the important things of the world”. “Now if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, WHY, as though living in the world have **the important things of the world** such a hold on you? Fetishes like Touch not! Taste not! Treat not! – doctrines that **all presently affect corruption in its very practice**, exactly as the teachings of men would persuade you to do – which things indeed have the impression of being wise, but wise in its own stubborn worship and haughty in its own humility, not in any honour, but to the satisfaction of the flesh”. (This as near as literal I think it is possible to translate verses 20 to 23.)

The **fetishes** of verses 21-22 are the **grim contextual opposites** of the “**feasting** (“meats” and “drink”) of the (yearly) **occasions** for feasting, the monthly feasts” and (naturally, weekly) “Rests” of Colossians 2:16. The fetishes are the “philosophic” answer of **ascetic “nature”** to the “Old Testament” “feasts” of **Christian spirit and symbolism**. The first is not the “*manner*” of the last – not even its

perversion! The two are **exclusive ideologically as well as practically ... and contextually and in terms of plain language**. “The doctrines and falsities of man” “**are presently affecting your corruption in its very practice**”, 2:22. The two oppose each other, and in no sense and in **no “aspect”** emerge from the same Body, complementing each other. “Philosophy” (the “*false teachings*”) is “**possessed**” with the “body of the flesh” and in 3:5 Paul specifically mentions sins of “inordinate affection” characteristic of these “on the earth” propensities or “members”. The fetishes reach the ambit of “fetishism”. Paul elsewhere describes the “nature” of these sins as “**sin against one’s own body**” (1Cor.6:18) meaning, to its **physical detriment**. So, yes, Paul does “*give us (a) few hints*” at “*the nature of the regulations*” the “**world**” had up its sleeve for the Church. (p. 113 / 114) *To put it crudely*, it had more to do with immorality than with feasts and had nothing to do with regulations on top of feasts of devotion.

Under these assaults from outside the Church lives its **normal** life, a normal life “in respect of eating, drinking, new moons and rest”. “These things **are**” Church-life normal. But **only part** of normal Church-life, of course. The “*practices*” of “these things” show what it is all about – “these things (eating, feasting) are” **about Christ** who “triumphed over **them**” the **destroyer** of the Body the Church. “These things (the feasts)” are of symbolic value and validity, of spiritual reality and reality: the **abode** of Jesus Christ on earth! “These things”, that consist in “feasting, in monthly repose and the weekly rest”, characterise the “Principality and Power” which is **Jesus**. It, namely, “YOU”, are “complete in Him”, 2:10. What belongs to Christ cannot be confused for what belongs to perdition.

The **ordinary** – the “things” taken for granted in the life of the Church like the shadow of the body is taken for granted in the existence of the living organism – indeed simply prove **there is this Reality and this Reality**. It is prove of the Reality and the Realty of the **Body** – “the **Abode that is Christ’s**”, his **Church!**

As the Church is in the world yet not of the world, so even “philosophy”, the “world”, may be in the Church yet not of the Church. Such a situation **neither** in Rome **nor** in Colossus **exactly** existed. In **Rome** the opposing parties were both still brothers in Christ; their motivation and devotion notwithstanding their sin, “to the Lord” and “in gratefulness to God”; their motivation and devotion notwithstanding, both guilty of sin “worthy of death”. (See above, Par. 8.2.1.)

In **Colossus** inroads were in fact made by the “world”. Paul **could** cry out, “*Why, as though you live in the world are you subject to petty rules?* – speaking to the Church!” **But that at the same time is Paul’s reminder** to the Church, “*You are not living in the world! You should act*

like Christians because **you are Christians**, and are **not** to be misled and **perhaps be severed** from your Head, Jesus Christ - through the misleading of these "wise men of the world"! You are the **Free Subjects** of the dominion of **Christ**, not the bewitched subjects of the destroyed, spoiled and vanquished principality or dominion of the **world!** "Therefore!" says Paul, 'Let no man (of the "world" whom Christ "openly put to shame") judge you (in your normal "walk worthy of the Lord" (1:10), and "joying beholding your order" (2:5) and Faith (1:23, 4)! Paul just as well of the "aspect" of Church-order and Faith of "food, drink,

feast, new moon and rest", could have said, "Continue and watch in it", as "in prayer", 4:2! 'As long as you **maintain perspective** (verse 17) in these things and don't make of it the **Body** – food and drink are not the Kingdom of God! The shadow belongs to the **Body** and the **Body** belongs to **Christ**. **The Lord** belongs not to the Church neither belongs the Church to the shadow! **The Lord is Owner** – He is not owned.' We are Christ's slaves and He is not our servant ... although He served us and still serves us as **only the Lord Jesus** would. Just so, even though the Church serves not the Sabbath but it serves the Church, the Church honours the Sabbath ... as indeed the Lord Jesus did.

8.2.5.20.

"Kept for the sake of 'the elements of the universe'"

In direct contradiction to our conclusion, Eduard Lohse in Bacchiocchi's opinion "perceptively notes", "In the context of Colossians, the command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath is not based on the Torah according to which Israel received the sabbath as a sign of her election from among the nations. Rather the sacred days must be kept for the sake of 'the elements of the universe' who direct the course of the stars and also prescribe minutely the order of the calendar . . . The 'philosophy' made use of terms which stemmed from Jewish tradition, but which had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of 'the elements of the universe'." (p. 114, c)

Lohse "perceptively notes"? "Perceptively", only because agreement of views? "In the context of Colossians, the command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath is not based on the Torah"? In Col.2:16 there exists no **direct** "command to keep festival". Yet Paul presupposes the original institution of "festival" as being "based on the Torah". In Col.2:16 there **also**, exists no "command" **not** "to keep festival". In Col.2:16 Paul "commands", "**you**" the Church, "**should not let** / should not **allow**" "**any**" "man" / "philosophy", "**to judge**" (for which word I cannot find an equivalent), "**you**" the Church. Let us abide to Scripture if what we are able to say cannot but corrupt it. "The command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath" - "in the context of Colossians," "is not

based on the Torah' but immediately on the **circumstance in the Church in the city in the time**. And it is a "command" and indeed by **implication** a "command to keep festival" etc. "**not based on the Torah**" as document of origin, but based on **Paul's apostolic "ministration"**, "**whereof I, Paul, am made a minister**" (2:19, 1:25).

(And, by the buy, "Israel received the sabbath as a sign of her election from among the nations" not as "in the flesh" or "according to the circumcision of the flesh". Israel received the sign for as long as "her election from among the nations" as the spiritual habitation of God, "House of Israel", would last, and that is as long as the "election from among the nations", the "ecclesia" **the Body that is Christ's**, shall be.)

"Rather the sacred days must be kept for the sake of 'the elements of the universe". Lohse propagates the very **apostasy** of the Galatian Church that wasn't applicable to the Church in Colossus. In any case not as far as can be made out from the Letter to the Colossians. We cannot draw up our own "inventory" and create a "written document against and contrary to" the Congregation of Colossus - not while Christ has wiped it out completely and it is not even reflected or suggested in this Letter on paper.

That "sacred days must be kept for the sake of 'the elements of the universe" openly contradicts Paul's whole plea on behalf of the Freemen of Christ. And one should understand not a "command" in these words, but a **plea** on behalf of the **Church** and at the same time a **denouncement** of the "**philosophy**" that attempts this hideous detraction on Christ's Body.

"The 'philosophy' made use of terms which stemmed from Jewish tradition, but which had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of 'the elements of the universe'."

Colossians 2:16 consists of Paul's words in the direct voice, "Therefore let no man ...". Lohse says – according to Prof. Bacchiocchi, quite "perceptively" – that "the 'philosophy' made use of terms". Lohse says the same subject, "philosophy", "transformed" these "terms" "in the crucible of syncretism." But Paul wrote the Letter himself, and must have collected from "the crucible of syncretism" the scruff for the formulation of the appeal he here vents. And he does so for the purpose that the "terms ... had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of 'the elements of the universe'." Lohse's "terms" indicate "festival, new moon, and sabbath", and "festival, new moon, and sabbath", "had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of 'the elements of the universe'." "... The sacred days must be kept for the sake of 'the elements of the universe'." That means that Paul pleaded for subjection through "festival, new moon, and sabbath" of the Church "to the service of 'the elements of the

universe”. And so doing Paul acted one of, if not chief, of the “*false teachers*”, and worked toward **their** aims, as no other could equal, even having infiltrated the very Apostolic Authority of Scripture!

[A certain Professor of Theology once wrote to me, that when he cannot understand something, he throws it in the ashtray – just like that – with gleeful contempt I am sure! But I after some time came to realise that what he understands but cannot take, he throws in the ashtray. And, so it seems to me for tangible reason, what he cannot understand but can take, he endorses and promotes with much acclaim! Yes, many praise him for it and even the Pope bestows much honour upon the man.]

Prof. Bacchiocchi continues, p. 114, c, Heading: “*Condemnation of Perversion. ... In the case of the Colossian ‘philosophy’, the dietary taboos and the observance of sacred times were apparently regarded as an expression of subjection to and worship of the cosmic powers (elements) of the universe.*”

Prof. Bacchiocchi repeats Lohse’s fancies.

There is no qualitative, intrinsic connection or similarity between ‘*philosophy*’ of “*dietary taboos*” and “*sacred times*” referred to in Col.2: 21-22 and in verse 16. “*Dietary taboos*” and “*sacred times*” in every respect of kind, character and practice were unrelated and uninfluenced by each other. **They were opposing “philosophies”**. Paul not only condones but defends the one and rejects the other; sees the one as of the Church that is of Christ, and the other as of the teaching that is of the world. The one, as long as the body remains, remains its shadow and with it moves and grows as being a spectre of what is to become of the Church. The other, as long as “fashion” sticks, “spends itself”. The one is to the nourishment of the Body, to its unity and bonding to the Head. The other “philosophy” is to dissection and dislodging from the Head and the Body. The one is free and joyous in labour and in rest – Christ having spoilt all principalities that oppose it. The other is under bondage to the neglect of the body and its satisfying in things dishonourable and distressing. The one is based on victory and triumph over the rule and power of condemnation; the other have but a show of wisdom and brags self-worship. To summarise: The one concerns the Body – with a capital letter; the other the body of flesh. Besides - technically speaking - the fetishes of verses 21-22 imply “touch not”, “treat not”, and, “taste not” – thrice have nothing to do with “eating or with drinking; thrice exhibits no similarity with “feasts, months or sabbaths in respect of eating or of drinking”. It may well imply (it does not state) the prohibition of anything of the kind of feast. Thus the ‘*philosophy*’ of “*dietary taboos*”, to repeat what we have pointed out above, **through its very negation and abnegation** of the body of “food and drink”, makes of “food and drink” the kingdom and realm of the “principality” “of the world” and the

“principle” of the “doctrines of man”.

8.2.5.21.

Neither Directly Nor Indirectly

“*Paul’s warning against the ‘regulations’ of the false teachers can hardly be interpreted as a condemnation of Mosaic laws regarding food and festivals, since what the Apostle condemns is not the teachings of Moses but their perverted use by the Colossian false teachers. A precept is not nullified by the condemnation of its perversion.*” (p. 114, d) (Emphasis CGE)

Prof. Bacchiocchi first formulates the hypothesis that Paul supposes that *false teachers* “*imposed*” (p. 112 bottom) “*regulations*” on *how to observe these practices (food, feasts ... sabbaths)* and that they “*perverted (its) use*”. Prof. Bacchiocchi then goes on – hypothetically – that Paul distinguishes between the **corruption** or “*regulations*” “*regarding*” the “*food and festivals*” and the “*food and festivals*” as such or as considered pure “*Mosaic laws*” or “*teachings of Moses*”. Paul actually then is “*warning against*” the **corruption**, against the “*regulations*” and the “*perverted use*”. But there is absolutely no mention, indication, inference or suggestion as to Prof. Bacchiocchi’s assumption that Paul in terms of and with reference to “*Mosaic laws regarding food and festivals*”, was “*warning against the ‘regulations’ of the false teachers*”. Paul is “*warning against*”, “*regulations*”, and, “*perversion*” ... *per se*. “*Regulations*”, and, “*perversion*” being the “philosophy”, the “wisdom of the world”, the “doctrines of man” etc. etc. Paul is **never** “*warning against*” “*teachings of Moses*” directly or indirectly.

“***Shadow of Reality. Paul continues his argument in the following verse, saying, “These are the shadow of what is to come: but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col.2:17). To what does the relative pronoun “these” (ha in Greek) refer? Does it refer to the five practices mentioned in the previous verse or to the “regulations” (dogmata) regarding these practices promoted by the false teachers?***”

Prof. Bacchiocchi further reasons on the basis of his supposition that “*the “regulations” (dogmata) regard... these practices ... the five practices mentioned in the previous verse*” (verse 16). One, in order to find out to what the relative pronoun “these” refer, **has to distinguish between two things**. The one is “*the five practices mentioned*”, and the other, the supposedly supposed “*regulations*” (dogmata) **regarding these practices**” - **not** mentioned and for all the money of the world, not contextually, linguistically, inferentially, relatively, relevantly or however, **there**, in verse 16. Common sense demands if these are the things to decide between, the relative pronoun “these” can **only** refer to “*the five practices mentioned ...*” in verse 16.

Prof. Bacchiocchi announces, "In a previous study" on the question, "Does (the pronoun "these") refer to the five practices mentioned in the previous verse or to the "regulations" (dogmata) regarding these practices promoted by the false teachers?", "I argued for the former, suggesting that Paul places dietary practices and the observance of days "in their proper perspective with Christ by means of the contrast 'shadow-body' ". Additional reflection has caused me to change my mind and to agree with E. Lohse that the relative pronoun "these" (ha) refers **not** to the **five** mentioned practices as such, but rather to the "regulations" regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers." (p.115, a)

Paul "refers to" **one** "practice as such" – "eating" and "drinking", in fact the "eating or drinking (customs) with regard to feasts, new moons or Sabbaths".

Paul actually do refer to this practice, and in no manner "to the "regulations" regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers".

Prof. Bacchiocchi's previous and recent "suggestions" are essentially no different. Both are based on an answer supplied even before the question could be formulated properly. "I argued for the former, suggesting that Paul places **dietary practices** and the observance of days "in their proper perspective ...". Into Lohse's "crucible of syncretism" is first poured "the five mentioned (Mosaic) practices as such", then are added "dietary taboos" (114 c), then in comes the "element" of "regulations promoted by the false teachers" before the juggling into "proper perspective" is started. Then to the fall of the dice one may decide or change one's mind and again decide either this or that. But essentially the mix-up starts with the whimsical introduction of "dietary taboos". Just label "dietary taboos", "regulations promoted by the false teachers" (- the same thing!) and voila! "these things"!

The pronoun "these (things)" **cannot** refer to the "regulations regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers", simply because "such practices" as "dietary taboos" or "dietary practices" (Which now, "taboos" or "practices"?) are in **no manner** mentioned, referred to, or even suggested in verse 16. They are in no manner mentioned, referred to, or even suggested **in verse 16**, in **any** of the **foregoing** verses or in **any** of the verses **after** – **not until verse 21!** And, most importantly, the relation in the end drawn between the **two things** mentioned in the **two places**, is one of **contrast** and of **opposing** and **excluding** concepts or "principles". One of "worldly" "rule", the other of the "rule of God and peace"; the one "in will worship", the other "in your hearts" (3:15, 2:13-15).

"A Reference to "Regulations." This conclusion is supported by two considerations. First, in verse 16, Paul is not warning against the

merits or demerits of the Mosaic law regarding food and festivals, but rather against the "regulations" regarding these practices advocated by the false teachers. Thus, it is more plausible to take "the regulations" rather than the actual practices as the antecedent of "these".

"Paul is not warning against ... the "regulations" whatsoever. Paul warns the Church personally and directly as he warns the "false teachers" – "any man" personally but indirectly, against "**judging**" the Church, against putting the Church in the dock for "these things that are the shadow of the Body that is Christ's (the Church)"! But mark, Not the shadow of the Body as I have here stated, to be exact, but **this** shadow of **this** Body which is Christ's, "**coming**", unflinching "**growing** with the increase of God"! What you **now** see, o self-conceited judge, o man of the world, o philosophy, o wisdom, "is (but) a shadow of **that which is coming**, of **this** Body which is Christ's! His Kingdom shall fill the earth! "These (things)" can refer to nothing else on earth. It is the very opposite of the "regulations". One could rather attempt to disprove the Body is Christ's Church than to question the fact that "these

things are the spectre of this **Body** that is Christ's **as it shall be**. The "false teachers' regulations" **are** in fact supposed and referred to in 2:16, **not** as Prof. Bacchiocchi claims in "these (things)" – ha, but in the pronoun tis, "any (man)"! Paul is warning against the "regulations" as pronounced in this pronoun. And he warns: "Do not o man, o philosophy, o principles of the world – tis, judge the Church which is Christ's Body even though at this moment in its history it is but the shadow of what (it) is to (be)come, indeed the Body which is Christ's increased with the increase of God!" And to the Church, Paul says, 'Don't let any of these false teachers or their teachings judge you in your freedom after Christ has "triumphed over them" all! Don't let any of these false teachers or their false teachings judge you in your by the doctrines of man, unbecoming feasting on yearly, monthly and even weekly repose of Sabbath rests. Christ obtained rest, has finished God's work, has entered into His own rest. Don't let any man or principality or power rob you of this freedom which He has attained for you.' The tenet of the imperative goes against the idea, 'Don't let them prescribe to you HOW to feast your feasts or be judged!' or, 'Don't let them prescribe to you TO FEAST your feasts or be judged!' (or, "No one should prescribe to you to keep the Sabbath". See above, Par. 6.2.2.1.5.3.) The tenet as well as the wording, the context as well as Paul's own practice, show he means, 'Don't BE INTIMIDATED by these false teachers NOT to feast your feasts!' Paul says, literally, "Let no man ("false teachers") therefore **judge you** (not your "manners", not your "sabbaths", but **you!**) in meat, or in drink, or, in respect of meat, or, in respect of meat or drink of feasts, of new moons, or of sabbath days"! "

You, are the Free of Christ!

“Second, in the verses that immediately follow, Paul continues his warning against the deceptive teachings, saying, for example, “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement ...” (2:18); “Why do you submit to regulations, ‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ “ (2:20-21)?”

To prove that “it is more plausible to take “the regulations” rather than the actual practices as the antecedent of “these””, Prof. Bacchiocchi claims, “Paul continues his warning ... in the verses that immediately follow”. Only verse 18, and not verse 19 - which is pivotal, is occupied with “the deceptive teachings”. And in verse 18, as Prof. Bacchiocchi notes himself, there is no mention of either “dietary practices” or “dietary taboos” or “dietary rules” (p. 117 c), only “the deceptive teachings”. **Where is the connection** between, “food or drink ... food or drink in respect of holy days ... or sabbath days”, and, **1**, “self-abasement”, **2**, “worship of angels” and **3**, “mystery solving”?

How is it possible to insist on connection of these three “doctrines” or “philosophies” or “principles” of verse 18 with “these things” - ha, of verse 16 while it is difficult just to find connection with known and understood ideas in order to translate them? These concepts are so strange no one has ever been able to say exactly what they indicate. Yet Prof. Bacchiocchi claims there is an “immediate” connection between them and the “Mosaic” “practices” of verse 16, because the “false teachers” “imposed” such “regulations” on them! The “Mosaic” “practices”, as shown above, were **well known** and **understood** quite clearly for what they were – but not according to Prof. Bacchiocchi! According to him, “the data provided by Colossians are too meagre to answer this question (What kind of Sabbath?) conclusively. Yet the nature of the heresy allows us to draw some basic conclusions.” (p. 117 b) (Emphasis CGE) Scripture is unclear, but Prof. Bacchiocchi possesses basic and conclusive insights. It was a sad day that “we”, Christians, must “draw” our “basic conclusions” from “the nature of the heresy” because “the data provided by Colossians (the Scriptures) are too meagre to answer this question”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi ignores verse 17. Paul does not. Paul does not “continue his warning” in verse 18. He warns **anew** and **again** after he in verse 17 had drawn the true and real relation between the festive “practices” of **the Church** and its ultimate **end and aim**, the **Body or Church** that is **Christ’s** (and not the world’s). Instead of being mentioned for being **related** concepts, Paul refers to the philosophic trinity of verse 18 as the specific **threatening opposite** of the dominion or “Body” which is **Christ’s**. He actually interrupts and parenthetically inserts a crucial warning: “Let no man beguile you of your reward” -

verily the reward that is this Body that is Christ’s! Verse 17 described the **“reward”** about which Paul warns the Church: the **Body** and its **Lord-Owner!** Don’t “let go” of your “prize”, your Head and King, and of your Realty, the Body, your only true abode on earth. Nothing **else** is the believers’ “reward”! The believers’ reward is the teaching of Jesus and of the Kingdom of God; it is the Gospel! Else you indeed will be “misled” and brought under the oppressive god of the world, the “philosophic” trinity as described in verse 18! **which has nothing to do with “these things” of verse 17 and 16.**

Instead of any connection or resemblance between the concepts of verses 16 (feasts, Sabbaths and feasting) and verses 18 (philosophic trinity) there is this **positive** connection, resemblance, and relation between verse 17 and 19. Between “Body” of which Christ is **Owner** – Genitive – v.17, and **Head** – v.19; which “is near” / **“approaching”** / “imminent” – v.17, is “increasing with the **increase** of God” – v.19. And there is this **negative** connection, resemblance and relation between verse 18 and 17 as just described above and elsewhere several times. Then again connection may legitimately be drawn between verse 18 (philosophic trinity, “false humility”, “angels’ worship” and “things invisible being intruded” / “initiates’ prerogatives”) and the section from verse 20b to verse 23. **This section**, verse 20b to verse 23, “rudiments of the world ... ordinances (like) Touch not! Taste not! Treat not! ...”, might reasonably be assumed as a **further description** of the specialities of the philosophic trinity of verse 18. And it includes **but one** reference to “dietary taboos”, namely **“taste not”**. “Data” as pertaining “the nature of the heresy allows us to draw” **almost no “conclusions”** and **certainly no “basic”** ones and **especially** not much on “dietary taboos”.

“Since what precedes and what follows that relative pronoun “these” (ha) deals with the ‘regulations’ of the Colossian ‘philosophy’, we conclude that it is the latter that Paul describes as ‘a shadow of what is to come’ (2:17).” (p. 115 d)

We, despite, must conclude - for these reasons of contextual relevancy, what precedes and what follows the relative pronoun “these” - ha, deals with what Paul says it deals with. What precedes and what follows that relative pronoun “these” (ha) deals with “feasting ... feasts ...” and “the nearing, coming Body that is Christ’s”! “The ‘regulations’ of the Colossian ‘philosophy’” have nothing to do with **“these things”!** They must be seen instead as being personified in the pronoun, *tis* “anybody” that might try to “judge You”, Christ’s Body.

Paul with the indefinite pronoun *tis*, though, **do have** in mind this “philosophy” or “man” of the “world”. He, with his ‘regulations’ and all, at the time was not “to come”, but **actually** “judged” and condemned “you”, the “Body”, for being the Freemen under the “rule and power” of

the “Head”, **Christ**, and not under the “rule and power” of the “dominion of darkness”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi places over against each other the “regulations ... of the proponents of the Colossian ‘philosophy’ (that) represented a copy which enabled the believer to have access to reality (“fulness”). ... Paul is turning their argument against them by saying that **their regulations** ‘are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ’ (2:17)”. (p. 115 e) Prof. Bacchiocchi’s presentation of **the nature of the “philosophy”** could be realistic - that it claimed a “fulness” that **Paul** claims only could be received freely “in Christ” because of **His ... forgiveness of sins!** Such a “fulness” the philosophers denied and that was the reason they judged the Christians FOR THEIR CELEBRATING IN IT, and Paul judged THEM for judging the Church in its celebrating! It all was an issue over salvation – its basis, its event, its effect and its answer returned its Source, Activator and Finisher. Its answer (from its basis) included eating and feasts!

“Their regulations ‘are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ’” is a **contradiction in terms**. Not Prof. Bacchiocchi only, but the **translators** who translate verse 17 in the words, “but the substance” must wear blinds for not seeing it. To say that “these things” = “regulations of philosophy”, is “... a shadow of what is to come”, yet = “but”, “the substance” = the ‘noun’ this ‘pro-noun’ stands ‘for’ = “reality that casts the shadow / is the shadow’s, “but belongs” not to it, “but” “to Christ”, means “these things” – *ha*, **cannot** be the relative pronoun of “regulations of philosophy”.

We have already shown above that “**but**” is not the right word to use for the Greek’s article and the conjunctive, *to de* – which **emphatically**, will not **contrast** and **distinguish**, but will **relate** and **confirm**: “**indeed! / in fact!**” : “these things are a shadow of the approaching – indeed of the Body that is Christ’s!”

“In the light of the above indications, we conclude (again) that what Paul calls a “bygone shadow”, is not the Sabbath but the deceptive teachings of the Colossian ‘philosophy’ which promoted dietary practices and the observance of sacred times as auxiliary aids to salvation”. (p. 116 a)

Paul calls nothing a “*bygone shadow*”. As we have already established. He speaks of an in his day cast shadow, cast by an-in-its-approach-occurring-“thing”, its “Body-being-that-which-belongs-to-Christ”. Paul says this and saying this indicates, verifies, what it “**is**” - *estin*, not “was”, and **not in what manner something else**. “**IT IS**” - **THE CHURCH**, unmistakable!

“**These things**” can but be “the foods, the drinks, the feasts, the new moons and the sabbaths”, they being “a shadow-of-the-Church-the-

Body-that-is-Christ’s, “Pertaining to” “these things”, the **world’s philosophy judges “you” – the Church**. Nothing of “*these things*” “belongs to the **world**”, “is of the **world**” and is **not** “of **Christ**” or not “after **Christ**”.

Looking at “these things”, “the foods, the drinks, the feasts, the new moons and the sabbaths” from the viewpoint of **Paul**, one cannot help but notice that **Ezekiel** 45:17 is the only of the five Old Testament Scriptures that *reverses* the “logical and progressive sequence”. And one wonders why? And me think because Ezekiel thereby places greater emphasis on the “Blotting out / oblation of sin” and the “Provision for sin” and “the Prince’s part” and the “cleansing of his Sanctuary” and the “pastures” and the “House of Israel”! And me think if no man can see he must have eyes seeing but sees not **who** is concerned in this method employed by both Ezekiel and Paul. Paul would use the “reverse order”, “feast, new moon, Sabbath”, **because he looks back**, whereas the four of earlier Old Testament times looked forward, while **Ezekiel was so near**, he, as Paul once said, “reaches forward as though to take hold”.

“Feasts” should be what in the four earlier references comes last. Prof. Bacchiocchi observes, “in the Septuagint the annual ceremonial Sabbaths are ... always designated with the compound expression ‘Sabbath of Sabbaths’ (sabbata sabbatohn)”. (p. 116 c) “Feasts” actually stands for the Great Day of the Feast Season. We have noticed and noted in our studies on Romans 14:5-6 that the “days” there and all the other indications describe the Passover. In Colossians though **all** the Feasts are implied and supposed. “New Moons” and “sabbaths” for no reason why not, and for every contextual reason, were just that, The “New Moons” and the “Sabbaths” that were any and or specific other “Sabbaths” of those festive Seasons. Nevertheless there is no reason why Paul had not in mind also the **weekly** Sabbath, seeing he does not directly have the “**days**” in mind, but the **celebrations** that **accompanied** the occasions or “Feast-occasions”, “New Moon-occasions” or “occasions of Sabbaths”-**rest!**

“The fact that the plural is used in the Scripture to designate not only the seventh day Sabbath but also the week as a whole ... Mark 16: Luke 24:1, Acts 20:7 ...”. (p. 116 bottom)

“The plural is used” is certainly not *per se* “to designate ... the week as a whole”. In none of these texts is the “*whole week*” its meaning, but a **specific day** “of the week” – in every instance the **First Day**. The specific meaning does not derive from the plural, but from the **number** the day gets within its relation to the “*whole week*” – in all the instances referred, “the **First Day** of the week”. The use of the **plural** is **conditional** in such a construction and will in fact **always, not** refer to the Sabbath – **the day to which reference is made when indicating**

which day of the week. The plural **when used with the numeral** other than the “seventh”, **always** will refer to any **one** of the **other** “*week-days*” with reference to the main day of that cycle of days, the Seventh Day. The plural when used by itself, will **never** indicate or refer to “*week-days in general*”. **It is incomprehensible how Prof. Bacchiocchi could prefer the contrary!**

The fact that Paul in **Galatians 4:10** does **not** use the word “sabbaths” but the word “days” implies that he means **days in general** – so “**general**” they cannot even be called “*week-days in general*” (p. 117 top). But how does Prof. Bacchiocchi manage to infer, “*The fact that the Galatian list begins with “days” ... suggests the possibility that the “sabbaths” in Colossians may also refer to week-days in general rather than the seventh-day Sabbath in particular.*” By the mere and **alleged** “*fact that the Galatian list begins with “days”.*” (p. 117 a) What logic! All the important “facts” the different Letters “*suggest*”, making such a comparison and conclusion as Prof. Bacchiocchi here puts forward simply **impossible**, he suddenly **forgets**. The obvious fact of the different terminology he simply **ignores**, and the Professor unequivocally claims the “*lists*” are identical but for their order of “*sequence*”.

“*Assuming for the sake of inquiry that the ‘sabbaths’ in Colossians do refer to or include the Sabbath day, the question to be considered is: What kind of Sabbath observance would the false teachers advocate? The data provided by Colossians are too meagre to answer this question conclusively. Yet the nature of the heresy allows us to draw some basic conclusions.*” (p. 117 b)

Bacchiocchi’s final word? It is this: “**Heresy**”! And the heresy was this: A “*kind of Sabbath observance*”! It was a “*kind of Sabbath observance ... the false teachers advocate(d)*”. So the Church who fell for “*the false teachers*”, erred, and they therein came under judgement – under Paul’s judgement. According to Prof. Bacchiocchi, that is.

“*The question to be considered is: What kind of Sabbath observance would the false teachers advocate?* The Letter calls for no such question, not here, nor elsewhere. The inquirer for the sake of inquiry should be kept within limits by the “*data provided*”. No word, no circumstance, no provocation occurs or exists in this Letter that could suggest an issue or debate or ideological clash or discussion over “*what kind of Sabbath observance the false teachers would advocate*”, or *what kind of Sabbath observance*, Paul, or any Church member or members would *advocate* or discourage or prohibit. The **Question** is uncalled for. The question, even just “*for the sake of inquiry*”, is unjustified.

In all fairness though it might be asked, “How would the **Church** have celebrated its Sabbath days, and, considering the particular circumstances of their worship and state of constitution, or “order”, how

would the **Church** also have celebrated its **weekly** Sabbaths? And the answer would come **easy and unforced**, and, **relevant**: They feast and they keep Sabbaths celebrating, eating, drinking, even observing new moons for feasting! **It is as integral of their worship as prayer and reading** – see Acts 15! But in exactly such freedom do they infinitely frustrate the meddlesome philosophers who heap on them injustice and judgement for it. ‘**Now I, Paul, will have none of their judging the Body of Christ in respect of its eating, drinking, feasts, new moons or Sabbaths.** You, dear brethren, observe and feast, but to the honour of the Head which is Christ and thank God – in and through and while you eat or drink or feast or new moon or rest. You have every reason for it, seeing what Christ did for you! And look ahead at what is in store for you, **even the hope of glory**, because what you now are and the things you now do, are but the shadow of things to come, even that Body, Christ’s, when with Him and in Him and He in you, He will be all in all! Don’t be persuaded from this your reward by any man because they are worshippers of strange gods and subjects of another rule and power! **No man is entitled or qualified to disqualify you by any standards or regulations but that of Jesus Christ the standard to which the Body that is Christ’s is measured. Theirs is not yours and yours not their rule and power of which Christ is Head.**’

Conclusion

What Prof. Bacchiocchi unambiguously wants to tell us – that by “sabbaths” Paul means “*ordinary*” “*week-days*”, “*corrupted*” by the “*false teachers*”, “*is totally wrong*”!

As for the real meaning of Colossians 2:16-17, The “shadow” - as Paul here uses the concept - should not be confused for something dogmatians describe as dark and occult, which Christ “blotted out” and “took out of the way”. *Skia* should be understood **contextually**, that it is only identifiable with “**these things**” mentioned in verse 16 - that may as well imply the Sabbath, “these things” being THE **SPECTRE OF THE CHURCH** for what it **should become** in the dispensation of God because it is Christ’s. (Cf. Hb.8:5, 10:1) A “shadow” (*skia*) is not something that comes and goes by itself. **As this Body appears** in the world and **this Head** is its **Light and Life**, the shadow remains, and **with the Body**, “**increases** with the increase of **God**”. (A shadow cannot exist without the Light shining upon the Body!)

Only after having discussed Galatians 4:8-10 does Prof. Bacchiocchi finally “*conclude*” the “*conclusion*” of his “*conclusion*” of his “*conclusions*” on the question of Colossians 2:16,

“*In the crucial passage of Colossians 2:16, Paul’s warning is not against the validity of observing festivals as such ... Implicitly,* (in fact,

directly.) *Paul expresses approval rather than disapproval of their observance ...*. p.123c

The worst the Church **at this point in its history** and under its circumstance in the world of philosophic wisdom and power could have done was to show temerity and fear and to succumb to the “rule” and “doctrine” and “principles” of “man”, the “world” and “philosophy”. Precisely for this reason Paul encourages the Church with these words, “Let no man therefore judge you! Not in anything you do, be it to eat, or to drink, or to eat and drink to celebrate feasts, new moons or sabbath days. These offer but a **glimpse** of God’s ideal for you, his Body, which, just imagine, **is Christ’s!**”

8.3.

Galatians 4:10

Weak and Beggarly Principles, A Relapse into Paganism

8.3.1.1.

“Law”

There are as many pamphlets on this Scripture as the categories of their inferiority. “The weak and beggarly principles” “whereunto ye desire to turn again” and “desire to be in bondage” to, they all say, are principally manifested in and represented by **keeping of the Seventh Day Sabbath**. These “weak and beggarly principles”, they generally allege, show and prove a “return” to “Judaism”, “Judaism” enhancing the “weak and beggarly principles” of which Paul writes. And, mind you, these little masterpieces of draconian law agree that a keeping of the First Day as the “Lord’s Day” sorts not under such religious “bondage” as keeping of the Sabbath does.

Strikingly only **controversial** “expositions”, specifically aimed at attacking the Seventh Day Sabbath, pose such attitudes and arguments, while (rare) treatises of **integrity** and real scholarship, seldom if ever, reach any conclusions that might incriminate or just implicate the Seventh Day Sabbath in Galatians 4:10.

The Church, in any case, as that catholic Body of Christ, has never accepted or tolerated the denial of the **Law’s** validity – which denial is necessary to propagate such arguments against the Sabbath Day and its observance. Even in its worst mutilated version the Law is confessed as saying, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy” (The Roman Catholic or Vulgate Fourth Commandment). The **Protestant** Church has always believed the Fourth Commandment unadulterated. The Church Catholic has always held that the Law’s binding claim constitutes the **duty of Christian freedom and worship**. The Church has always believed that the fruits of a Spirit-filled life “according to Christ” could never be in conflict with the spirit of the Law – which is God’s Law after all. Christ is more and greater than the Law and Christ’s greatness and superiority is what also elevates and magnifies the Law – which Christ thus and to this end fulfilled: “Lo I come to magnify thy Law o God!” Christ cannot be divided against himself – division is characteristic of the house of Satan.

The **presupposition** of all **Paul’s** arguments regarding the Law – the *nomos*, is its **validity**. If the Law were supposed in the Scripture under consideration, it beforehand would imply that Paul speaks not **against the Sabbath**. But seeing Paul in no uncertain terms speaks **against** whatever he speaks about here in Galatians 4:10, it cannot be the Sabbath Day. Paul’s position on the Law in a word is that the Law is “holy”, “spiritual” and “good” – Ro.7:12, 14, 16, and that it “**witnesses to**

the righteousness of God” – which implies the Law’s immutability. But the Law is desecrated and violated “if **by the works of the law** justification be obtained”, or “if **by the law** righteousness should come”, Gl.2:16, 21 – **which also** implies the Law’s immutability. See “Paul and the Law”, Par. 8.3.5.

But these arguments and arguers of whom we speak say that God’s Law in so far as God’s Sabbath Day is concerned, has of Christ’s own doing (of Christ’s own “*breaking*”) become a “weak and beggarly principle” – which to my mind to say stops nowhere before blasphemy. (Says one of these Doctors, “*Now that Christ for the believer has earned redemption it is a denial of Christ to keep the Sabbath (Seventh Day)*”. The propagators actually reason that man before Christ came, obtained righteousness through the Law and by the works of the Law – as if they needed not the Saviour for the salvation of their souls – which again to my mind to reason stops nowhere before blasphemy. Moreover do they claim, “*We are not under the law*”, yet they keep their own “Sabbath” – Sunday!

8.3.1.2. “Judaism”

*“Whatever the Lord’s Day (Sunday) had was its own, not borrowed from the Sabbath, which was regarded for religious purposes as existing no longer. Nay more, when certain Judaizing persons had troubled the Church by insisting that the law of Moses was binding upon Gentile converts, the Apostles met in council. Their decision was that certain things should be abstained from by the Gentiles, but they did not enjoin any positive ceremonial observance connected with the older Covenant, not even the Sabbath. And to this should be added that St. Paul in writing to the Colossians (2:16), to the effect, that ‘the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us’, was ‘blotted out by Christ’, ‘taken out of the way by Him’, and ‘nailed by Him to the cross’, subjoins this remarkable **exemplification of his meaning**: ‘Let no man therefor judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days : which are a shadow of things*

to come; but the body is of Christ’. (Emphasis CGE)

James said that the **Council’s resolutions** should be added to the Christian Confession of Faith, “*through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved*”. He said not that the Christian **Faith and Confession** should be added to Moses. The Church Confession and the **resolutions against idolatrous practices** were to be read in the **Church, everywhere, every Sabbath Day, as and when**, “Moses” was “preached”, **that is**, as and when **the Gospel of Jesus Christ** was preached “**from Moses and the Prophets**” — from the Old Testament

Scriptures! Moses and the preaching of Moses **accommodate and serve the Gospel**, every Sabbath Day, in the Church, everywhere. Now if that doesn’t show the **Christian Day** of Worship, it is of no avail to try and “persuade from the Scriptures” any man that it is.

“*Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us*”, says Paul. Considering “the Sabbath was made, **for man**” **by ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself**, that is, was made to man’s benefit, the Sabbath cannot be “against” man, and **cannot sort under the category of “ordinances that was against us”** (the Christian man or people). This argument is final, because it is New Testament, “Christian”, in the strictest possible sense!

*“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain’. No testimony can be more decisive than this to the fact that **the Sabbath was of obligation no longer**. In the Galatians and Colossians (Paul) is treating **entirely of the Jewish Law. Not days simply are before his thoughts, but Sabbath Days, festal seasons or times, (as the Seven Days of the Passover), New Moons, Sabbatical Months, Sabbatical Years, all of them distinctive features of Judaism, are aimed at. He is not thinking, so far as we can gather his thoughts from the context, of anything Christian, but simply protesting against the retention of anything Jewish. The very terms which he uses, will not include Christian days, they are essentially Jewish. ... These days of Judaism, which are professedly skiaï, or dispensations of shadows ... It is, however, worth notice, that St. Paul, according to his own testimony, (1Cor.16:2), had already urged on the very Galatians whom he desires not to be bound by Jewish days, the performance of the duty of alms-giving on a certain Christian day, the first day of the week.***

*“Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain’. No testimony can be more decisive than this to the fact that **the Sabbath was of obligation no longer**.”*

By admitting this, one admits that **no** testimony existed that the Sabbath was **not** of obligation **still**, and that no testimony shall be found, because of “*days, and months, and times, and years*” none are the Sabbath! And by admitting this, one admits that **no** testimony existed that the Sabbath was **not** of obligation **still**, and that no testimony to the effect shall be found, because at that time the Church “in every city **on every Sabbath**” at the “**preaching of Moses**” witnessed to the Christ!

“*In the Galatians and Colossians (Paul) is treating **entirely of the Jewish Law***”, says Hessey. This is entirely an unfounded claim, and also an illegitimate association of “*Galatians and Colossians*”. Hessey serves to illustrate how of a matter of course these false principles of

interpretation are applied, from which to reach false conclusions. *In the Galatians and Colossians Paul is treating entirely of different things.* In Colossians he admittedly, does treat on “Jewish” “feasts”, **but not in Galatians, plainly and intelligibly not!**

“Not days simply are before (Paul’s) thoughts”, Hessey correctly observes. It is not surprising he noticed Paul presupposes of these “days” a peculiar meaning – not at all common. But to claim that “Sabbath Days, festal seasons or times, as the Seven Days of the Passover, New Moons, Sabbatical Months, Sabbatical Years, all of them distinctive features of Judaism, are aimed at”, is but a repetition of Hessey’s false principles of interpretation and of his false conclusions. There is no logic in them, no substance and much and total prejudice. For their peculiar character the “days” “aimed at” by Paul obviously and simply were “days: like months, like seasons and like years”. They were “days” “observed” in the sense of being “in bondage” and under “servitude” to “gods by nature no gods” and to “elemental principles of the world” **of the former state of pagan worship** to which the Galatians in forsaking the pure faith of Jesus, “**returned**”. Those, “simply”, were the “days before Paul’s thoughts”.

In writing to the Galatians Paul in no “like manner” says what Peter and James in Acts 15, not speaking on the Sabbath Day, say. However, in writing to the Galatians Paul in very “like manner” says what Peter and James in Acts 15, also on pagan error speaking, say.

No “similar train of remark will apply to the passage in the Romans.” In fact “The Apostle is there urging upon his disciples the duty of mutual forbearance and tenderness for one another’s scruples”. In Galatians though Paul shows **no forbearance and tenderness** for the backsliders’ “scruples”. In Galatians 4:9-10 there is **no thing connected with Judaism or Heathenism in respect to which the virtues of forbearance and tenderness might find due exercise.** “**In vain**”, says Paul, “I fear, have I laboured for your sakes”!

“**So again**”, Hessey reiterates, “with respect to Judaism some would observe Jewish days as a matter of conscience, though they were converted to Christianity, lest they should cast any slight upon things which were originally of God’s ordaining – others thought of those same days as things no longer of obligation, and rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free ... But the general rule is, ‘in non-necessariis libertas, in omnibus caritas’”. J.A. Hessey, *Sunday*, pp. 37, 137. (Emphasis CGE)

“**So again ... with respect to Judaism, Jewish days ...**”, **while there’s no suggestion of it in Galatians!** Hessey cunningly **smuggles** the kind of “days” mentioned in Romans **into one’s thoughts** on the “days” mentioned in Galatians. He fails to see the **uniqueness** of each of

the three so-called “parallel” texts. His is of course the usual strategy to confuse. But these texts taken **contextually** clearly show little if any resemblance the one with the other. Of the three texts only Romans 14 and Colossians 2 contain a common feature in that “**Jewish**” “days” are supposed (in the case of Romans) and mentioned (in the case of Colossians).

And when we admit that the “days” relevant in Romans and Colossians were “**Jewish**”, we deny that they were “days” of “Judaism”. They were in fact “days” of **Old-Testament** institution, in fact Old Testament “**ceremonial**” “days” – but **far** from “Judaism”. “Judaism” is not “anything Jewish”, and “anything Jewish” is not “Old Testament”, and not everything “Old Testament” “was blotted out by Christ”. The “law of Moses” is no “distinctive feature of Judaism” but distinctly was a **feature of God’s** own dealings with Moses and Israel for being God’s **Church** of old.

The “days” supposed in **Romans** and in **Colossians** were, in Hessey’s own words, “Jewish days”, “originally of God’s ordaining” but “converted to Christianity”, which “some (in fact **everybody Christian, at first**) would observe as a matter of conscience”. But **Galatians** 4:10 neither supposes nor mentions “Jewish” “days”, but **heathen** “days of divination”.

As for the real meaning of these Scriptures, Hessey gives the exact interpretation in the case of Romans 14, “The Apostle is there urging upon his disciples the duty of mutual forbearance and tenderness for one another’s scruples”. Hessey is right in that the Church in Rome “would observe Jewish days as a matter of conscience, though they were converted to Christianity”. “Lest they should cast any slight upon things which were originally of God’s ordaining” Old Testament institutions such as Passover were observed. But not only “some”, “regarded days”. **Everybody** did. **Nobody** – no Christian in Rome – “thought of those same days as things no longer of obligation”. In Rome “the general rule (which Paul set, was), ‘in non-necessariis libertas, in omnibus caritas’”. The “necessity” or rather “non-necessity” in the Church of Rome, in the context of Romans 14, was not whether “days” should be regarded, but **which** days should receive **preference**, “**one** day above the others”, or, “**every** day alike”? But we don’t want to repeat this technical point which was already made clear in Paragraph 8.2.1, and we shall leave the matter here. Of importance is however, that Hessey himself has grasped the **true issue** in the Church in Rome. He has himself found it to be an issue about the “important things” of the Christian Faith – things that concern the **heart** and Christian **relationship** and **not** the “regard” Christians paid “days”.

But Hessey implies **gross inconsistency and great partiality** on the part of Paul. And in fact gross inconsistency and great partiality on the part of Paul in matters *necessariis libertas* – things “**important** to (Christian) liberty”, “*the* (Christian) *duty of mutual forbearance and tenderness*” – **love!** In Romans Paul in amiable spirit on the issue of “days” acts the peacemaker, but in Galatians he on the issue of “days” acts the judge of no remorse – that is, according to Hessey.

Hessey’s statement, “(They) *rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free*” could just as well or even better have served as a conclusion to the meaning of the **Colossians 2:16** passage. In the case of the Church in Colossus, **all** the Church “*rejoiced in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free*” and Paul would not allow the **Church**, “**you**”, the “*rejoicing*” – “in respect” of your feasting – to be judged by “**any**”, that is, by the heathen religious “**world**” of “philosophy”. But Hessey of course would not admit that, the “days” of “the three parallel texts” being the Don Quixote windmills of the Knights of the Day of the Sun.

Says Hessey, “*In the Galatians and Colossians (Paul) is treating entirely of the Jewish Law.*” Now Paul **in Colossians, is not at all “treating of the Jewish Law”** or of any “Law” to any degree. The word “law” or the concept or even idea of “Law” nowhere features as **the point at issue** in Colossians. Again we won’t repeat, so see Paragraphs 8.3 (“Paul and the Law”) and 8.2.2 (“A spectre of the Church”). Here the point is that in Colossians Paul has “*before his thoughts ... not days simply ... but Sabbath Days*”. “*All of them*” despite the fact that they were **not permanent**, yet were “*distinctive features*” of the **Christian Church!** Paul is thinking of “*things Christian*”. He protests against anything the Church could be **deprived** of through “philosophy” or the “world”.

Nobody was “*bound by Jewish days*”, not in the Church in Colossus, not in the Church in Rome, and not in the Churches of Galatia. In Rome as in Colossus the celebrating of these days were **free** and not from bondage. In Galatians the days **were not** these days, the days of Old Testament institution and of divine origin, but “days, like months, like seasons, like years, observed”, “in bondage”, to “gods by nature no gods” and under “principles”, “cosmic”, and “weak and beggarly”! Paul in Colossians *protests against the unbelievers’ judgement* of the Church in its **freedom** “regarding eating and drinking of feasts and Sabbath Days”. “*Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.*” Paul *protests* notwithstanding the fact that these were of Old Testament institution and retention, “*professedly skiaì, or dispensations of shadows of things to come, indeed the Church as Christ’s Body*” The Body still had to

“**grow with the growth of God**” (2:17, 18). All this is **most positively a defence** of the Church’s Faith and Practice, *subjoining Paul’s meaning* in the face of “the world”. It is no less than Paul’s endorsement of the stand the Church took **for believing in Jesus Christ!** But verse 17 is a **reminder to the Church** that it has not reached “fullness” yet and that its eating and drinking do not constitute the Kingdom of God (as Paul phrased the matter in Romans 14:17). The Church should strive towards perfection when “Christ (will be) all in all” and the Body will have reached “fullness”. **To boast perfection** is distinctive of the “wisdom” and “doctrine” of the “**world**”. **To strive and persevere towards perfection** is distinctive of the “Body that is **Christ’s**”. Paul in Colossians boasts achievement, attainment, “fullness”, “**in Christ**”. Colossians is occupied with Christ Jesus. It wastes no attention to “anti-Jewish” sentiment.

Paul’s **castigating** reprimand in Galatians 4:10 and 5:2 starkly contrasts with his approving, defensive and protecting **vouching** for the Church in Colossians. Nevertheless neither of the passages in any negative way concern **Jewish or Old Testament “days**”. In Colossians the **world’s judgement** on the Church over its **free-in-Christ celebrating**, feasting, eating and drinking, causes Paul’s belligerent outcry, “Let no man judge you”. In Galatians the Church’s “**bondage**” to “principles / rulers of the world” and “**relapse**” into idolatry causes Paul’s cry of anguish, “*You are fascinated by days, months, seasons, years! I am afraid for your sakes my labour was in vain!*”

The three texts should not be thrown together and interpreted with one word, “**Judaism**”! They must each be interpreted to the demands of their own **contexts and immediate content**, and while Romans 14:5-6 and Colossians 2:16-17 do shed some light one upon the other, neither helps understanding of Galatians 4:9-10 but by way of **contrast**.

“*The Sabbath ... was regarded for religious purposes as existing no longer*”, says Hessey. Yet he observes, “*the Apostles ... did not enjoin any positive ceremonial observance connected with the older Covenant, not even the Sabbath*”. Why would they not? The Council itself decided “That we write unto them (the Gentile Churches) **because Moses** since of old has his preachers, he being read in the Churches in every city every Sabbath Day”. “*Moses already tells all believers that they should abstain from idolatrous pollutions, from idolatrous fornication and from idolatrous eating of strangled meat and blood. We write to them that they should heed Moses in this regard and have an ear for the Gospel that sets them free from such things.*” These “decrees that were ordained of the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem” were put in writing (15:29) and carried by Paul and company and delivered in person to each Church “as they went through the cities ... for to keep”,

16:4. For Paul had decided, “Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do!” “And so were the Churches established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily”. In Troas (of all places) Paul received a vision and as direct result and without any by-ways went to Philippi “and on the Sabbath ... where prayer was wont to make, spoke” the Gospel and baptised believers, 16:9 to 15.

Paul delivered the Council’s decisions precisely where and when Moses was read in the Churches. Moses and the Sabbath were God’s instruments for the hearing of the Gospel. “*Those who in every city every Sabbath preach Moses*” is James’ terminology for the **organisational infrastructure** of the Christian Church of his time. In it lay its **activity and strength. It was of God’s providence.** Paul used the very opportunity the reading of Moses offered for the purpose of “proclaiming the Word of the Lord”! (Jesus did exactly the same Himself – He used the Scriptures of the prophets to explain the things concerning Himself – “as His custom was on the Sabbath Day”!) “Every Sabbath Day” created opportunity for proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the “preaching of Moses”. Yet, says Hessey, “*The Sabbath ... was regarded for religious purposes as existing no longer*”! Nothing could be farther from the truth of reality.

The Church’s **diction**, the reading of the **Scriptures** – “Moses”, guards its **decision** (the Council) and its **mission** (the Gospel)! And the **Sabbath** serves vehicle to its proclamation, that is, according to Acts 15:21! “*The Apostles did not enjoin any positive ceremonial observance connected with the older Covenant, not even the Sabbath*” because they **undesignedly employed** its positive institutional observance connected with the New as with the Old Covenant. The observance of the Sabbath – “*originally of God’s ordaining*” – was the *status quo* in the Church at the time of the Council. Certainly *the Sabbath for religious purposes was regarded as existing still.*

But the main problem with Hessey’s mention of the Jerusalem Council in connection with Galatians 4:10, is its **irrelevancy**. There exists no relation between the two passages but what for Hessey’s own purposes he creates. James *is not thinking, so far as we can gather his thoughts from the context, of anything not Christian* in Acts 15 **but what he specifies for not being Christian in verse 20.** And James *is, in fact, thinking, so far as we can gather his thoughts from the context, of nothing but things Christian* in **verse 21** as **necessities**, that *subjoin*, support and carry his own and the Council’s decision and vision for the Church. And Paul *is not thinking, so far as we can gather his thoughts from the context, of anything Christian* in Galatians 4:9-10. In both Scriptures though – and **herein lies their only semblance**, both James

and Paul are *but simply protesting against the retention of anything heathen and idolatrous.* The **very terms used** by James in Acts 15:20 *will not include Christian* – or “*Jewish*” – practices, or by Paul in Gal.4:9-10, *will not include Christian* – or “*Jewish*” – practices. The **practices** referred to in Acts 15:20 *are essentially idolatrous, and heathen.* “**Because of Moses**”, **idolatry** cannot be allowed or tolerated in the **Christian Church!** The “**days**” referred to in Gal.4:19 *are essentially idolatrous, and heathen.* These **days** as these **practices** are *professedly* “pollutions” and spiritual “fornications” from the Gentiles’ former status when they “knew not God and did service unto them which by nature are not gods”. Now converted Christians, these Gentiles “desire to be in bondage again” to these old gods of theirs! Unimaginable! These indeed were *dispensations of shadows* of hell and perdition. *St. Paul, according to his own testimony, urged on the Galatians not to be bound by pagan days.* He urged upon them *the duty* not to “**turn again**” to such “**weak and beggarly principles**”, “**worldly principles**” that manifested itself in the “**observations**” of “days and moons and seasons and cycles of years”. As when “**you knew not God**” these time-cycles like deities secured for the Galatians their future and fate. This was the case with regard to Galatians 4:10. This was Paul’s first letter, written while the converted still lived very near their heathen roots. This was **not** the case with regard to the Church in Colossus. In Colossians the matter of being “*bound by (pagan) days*” no longer existed. The whole letter to the Colossians is a manifest of Christian liberty. “*That ‘the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us’, was ‘blotted out by Christ’, ‘taken out of the way by Him’, and ‘nailed by Him to the cross’. subjoins this remarkable exemplification of Paul’s meaning: ‘Let no man therefor judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days : which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.’*” “Who condemns us? Christ is the One who died, yea rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us” ... will **He** condemn us? “He makes intercession for us!” Will **He** judge us? Indeed yes, and no man! “Then let no man judge you!” For “who shall separate us from the love of Christ, tribulation, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded”, says the same Paul who wrote Colossians and 2:16, “that neither death, nor life, nor **angels**, nor **principalities**, nor **powers**, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”. Here are two Scriptures that **for the purpose of their own meaning and message** may and should be compared and associated, Colossians 2:16-

17 and Romans 8:33-39. The early Christians **rejoiced**, “In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”. Christ the King served **us**, his **servants**, and wrought for us **eternal glory as though we were greater than kings**. Because **Christ** did it for us, we are greater than kings and conquerors! **What then, shall we not celebrate?** Shall we not eat, not drink, not on Feasts, not on New Moons, not on Sabbath Days of all days? “(God) left not himself without witness in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, **filling our hearts with food and gladness**”, Acts 14:17. Shall we not eat our fill nor quench our thirst? Is not the Bridegroom and his the Spirit with us? Will any fast? Shall we not because we know Christ or rather are known by Him, **rest our hearts and our bodies**? What do you take us for, spirits, ascetics, men of the world? Do you take us for **strangers** to the promises and the covenant of grace and the sure word of prophecy? Strangers to the fathers and the patriarchs and prophets? Is not Jesus, Son of man and Son of God, Lord also of our salvation and of our Sabbath Days – his own Sabbath Days? You, who so envy our freedom in **Christ**, shall not be the judge of **us**! This says Paul in Colossians 2:16. **This freedom Paul** in Galatians 14:9-10 **supposes by many of the Church scorned and slighted**, by many who “desire to turn again to the weak and beggarly principles” of the world of their former state in paganism.

8.3.1.2.1. 1 Thessalonians 1:9b - 10:

<p>How to God</p> <p>turned ye from idols</p> <p>to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son whom He raised from the dead, from heaven, Even Jesus who delivered us From the wrath to come</p>	<p>How after you have come to know God</p> <p>do you turn back again to things that by nature are no gods</p> <p>you desire to do servitude to weak and beggarly powers / rulers / principles</p> <p>you augur / haruspicate /divine days,</p> <p>months, seasons, years</p>
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“And now that you know God, or rather now that you are known by God, how do you turn again to the weak and beggarly rulers whom you desire to serve all over again? You really even divine days, months, seasons, years!” *‘Incomprehensible! Unbelievable!’* says Paul. *Can these masters save you from the wrath to come? Do these rulers upon whom*

*you fix your sight of their own rise from the dark like Christ by the power of God rose from the dead? You pine after your former celestial gods. These you would love to worship again. While **turning your back** on the Lord you really **look to** days, months, seasons and years! But even of these rulers Jesus Christ our Lord is Lord and He over their rule rules. So you improve or progress not, but turn back and fall low serving rulers themselves poor and beggarly. They are by nature no gods, but you make of them gods, serving and worshipping them as gods as if they could save you from the wrath to come!*”

Colossians 2:16-17 and Galatians 4:9-10 should not be compared for the sake of “Jewish days” or “Judaism”; also not Colossians 2:16-17 and Acts 15:20-21; also not Acts 15:20-21 and Galatians 4:9-10, and also not in between, beginning with and ending with Romans 14:5-6! For in the Scriptures of Romans and Colossians, the “days” are meant as Christian and, that of Galatians, as pagan. In Acts, in Romans and in Colossians, the “Law of Moses” opposes not the law of Christ nor does Christ oppose Moses, but the servant serves its Master faithfully “everywhere every Sabbath Day in the Church”.

“So again with respect to Judaism”, says Hesse, Paul, “in writing to the Galatians (4:9, 10) says in like manner ... some would observe Jewish days ...”. Hesse – and any in agreement with him – really has no argument. He only repeats over and over, the **one assumption**, that Paul in these “parallel” texts, speaks of “Judaism”, “Jewish days” and “anything Jewish”. Hesse may call it “the Law of Moses”, or “ceremonial”, Ridderbos may call it “axioms” of “bondage”, but at bottom the “**Judaism**” they have in mind differs nothing. While speaking on Galatians 4:10 having nothing substantially to say because nothing of what they beforehand wanted to have said can be found in this Scripture, Hesse like everybody else on Galatians 4:10 no more than **repeats** his digression on **Romans 14:5-6**. So it’s **Paul** who repeats himself in **three** Scriptures. “In the Galatians and Colossians (Paul) is treating entirely of the Jewish Law ... and a similar train of remark will apply to the passage in the Romans”.

Hesse implies that Paul repeats himself in **four** Scriptures, if Acts 15:20-21 is understood as the writing to the Churches of the apostles collectively, Paul included. **See Par. 7.1.5.1.1 Part 3/1**. Acts 15 should not be applied vindictively against the Sabbath (of which Jesus is **forever** Lord). **The Council supposed the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ** through the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of Moses “every Sabbath in the Church in every city”. In this must be seen the vindication of the Sabbath in Church-life of apostolic times. That would be the proper and just approach to the *Sitz im Leben* of the beginnings of Christianity. It must be concluded, that *when certain Judaizing persons*

had troubled the Church by insisting that circumcision was binding upon Gentile converts **because the law of Moses** required it, the Apostles met in council. Their decision was **1**, that **by authority of Moses** the question of circumcision justifies no discussion by the Council because it is fully answered by the truth of the doctrine of righteousness by faith only **to which Moses and the Law fully agree**. **2**, Their decision **by authority of Moses** was as far as the **Gentile** converts were concerned, that **certain idolatrous things should be abstained from**. **By authority of Moses** these idolatrous abominations were not “Lawful” for **Christians**. **3**, Their decision **by authority of Moses** did not enjoin any positive ceremonial observance connected with the older Covenant, not even the Sabbath, **because by authority of Moses** the Scriptures being read in the Church everywhere every Sabbath **vindicates completely, salvation in Jesus Christ by faith only**.

As if the Church knew “Scriptures” other than the Old Testament, Hessey and his like speak scornfully of Moses and the Sabbath. It is most inept to bring Acts 15 into support of arguments **against** the Sabbath claimed from the three so-called “parallel” texts.

8.3.1.3.

“Superstition”

*“In Galatians, as in Romans, the Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned. Paul does mention, however, that some Galatian Christians had themselves circumcised (Gal 6:12; 5:2) and had begun to “observe days, and months, and seasons, and years” (Gal 4:10). In many respects the polemic in Galatians 4:8-11 is strikingly similar to that of Colossians 2:8-23. In both places the superstitious observance of sacred times is described as slavery to the “elements”. In Galatians, however, the denunciation of the “false teachers” is stronger. They are regarded as “accursed” (Gal 1:8, 9) because they were teaching a “different gospel”. Their teaching that the observance of days and seasons was necessary to justification and salvation perverted the very heart of the Gospel (Gal 5:4).” Prof. S. Bacchiocchi, *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, vii, *The Sabbath in Galatians*, p. 121.*

“In many respects the polemic in Galatians 4:8-11 is strikingly similar to that of Colossians 2:8-23.” I am unable to see striking similarity in any respect between these two passages. Is it true that *“in both places the superstitious observance of sacred times is described as slavery to the “elements”?* In Galatians *“the superstitious observance of sacred times is described as slavery to the “elements”*”, but **not** in Colossians. How can Prof. Bacchiocchi assert that *“In Galatians, the denunciation of the “false teachers” is stronger”* when in **neither** passage Paul attacks *“false teachers”*? In **both** Letters Paul addresses the **Church** as such. In Colossians he **encourages** the Church

not to be “judged in food or drink of (Old Testament) feasts” etc. In Galatians he **denounces** the Church for its “observance” of “cosmic” “days”. *“However”* (which means **difference** between the two Scriptures), says Prof. Bacchiocchi, *“some Galatian Christians had themselves circumcised”*. The Colossians did not. The Galatians *“are regarded as “accursed” because they were teaching a “different gospel”*”, the Colossians are not. Paul defends the Colossians in their practices. **Their** “Gospel” was Paul’s, **their** “regard” for “days” was Paul’s. **Their** “days” were Paul’s, regardless of the future possibility that later Christians would even better than Paul understand these “days” as no longer binding or at least no longer binding in the same way and sense.

“In Galatians, as in Romans, the Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned”, says Prof. Bacchiocchi. Fact is, *in Galatians, as in Romans, the Sabbath is not explicitly mentioned* nor even implicitly suggested. The correct understanding of Ro. 14:5-6 and Col. 2:16 does not demand the denial of the fact but its acceptance that the Sabbath was kept in the two Congregations **for the very reason** that the Sabbath is not mentioned or even thought of in these passages. Also the Sabbath can be understood as **involved though not even implied** as the Sabbath-“**day**” “with regard” to which no one should judge the Church. The “strong” “regarded the day” and **naturally** would not have neglected the Sabbath Day! The inference follows from the **fact of the Sabbath’s observance** and not from its being mentioned or supposed in either of these Scriptures. And the inference follows not from the Sabbath’s **denunciation** in any way!

8.3.1.3.1. Persons Or Personifications?

“Be there **some** that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ ... let **him** be accursed”, says Paul in 1:7-8 “Foolish **Galatians**, **who** hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth?”, he asks in 4:1. Paul clearly supposes *“false teachers”*. He regards them *“as “accursed” (Gal 1:8,9) because they were teaching a “different gospel”*.” They tried to impose their perversion of the Gospel upon “them which are of faith, the same which are the children of Abraham”.

Nevertheless, the fact does not require that Paul meant these “bewitchers” **personally, throughout** his Letter. Rather, Paul “speaking after the manner of men” (3:15), imagines the **doctrines as such, as personae**. He addresses no separate clique of “false teachers” who harass the Church. He does not direct his words at “false teachers” nor does he have any in mind personally. Paul held the Galatians **Church** responsible. When saying, **“they** intoxicate / zealously affect you; yea, **they** would exclude you that you might affect **them”** (4:17), Paul has in mind the **“principles that rule”**, the **impersonal “elements”** ... whereunto ye

desire again to be in bondage” (9), to do “service unto **them which by nature are no-gods**” (8). “Do you see me, Paul, for your enemy?” (16) **I am not your enemy, “they”, these “non-gods” and “elements”, and the “strange gospel” are your personal enemy! “They” are “those” “who” “bewitch” you.**

Thus Paul **personifies** also the **Law**. “Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not **hear the law (speak)?**” (21). “God sent forth his Son ... to redeem them that are under the Law ... wherefor thou art no more a **servant** (of the Law as a personified master) but a **son.**” “These things are an **allegory** of two covenants”, says Paul, “The one”, says he, “stands for **Agar**” – Agar **personifies** the one covenant (24). “We are not children of the **bondwoman**, (31), but of the free “woman”. “Jerusalem above” seen as “**mother of us all**” (26), is the **personification** of God’s **Church**. “The heir ... is under **tutors and governors** (the law personified) ... so even we ...” (1, 2). Paul **personifies** the Law and the **idols**. He makes “**them**” **speak**; he makes them **lords, mothers, intimidating tyrants**, and the enticed believers, their pitiable servants and slaves. Paul speaks of “**false teaching**” as being “**false teachers**”. “**Who hath bewitched you?**” asks Paul as though he cannot indicate any specific **persons**. “**Their teaching that the observance of days and seasons was necessary to justification and salvation**” must be remembered actually is, **the teaching as such that the observations of days and seasons was necessary to justification and salvation**. And so it seems the **whole Galatians Church** had been led astray. Paul reasons as were the **errors, persons**.

“Some Galatian Christians had themselves circumcised (Gal 6:12; 5:2) and had begun to “observe days, and months, and seasons, and years.”

Paul addresses the **whole Galatians Church**. He does not indicate or implicate specific persons **in the proximity of 4:8-10 – not before 5:7 and 10**. And that is most important for the correct understanding of Galatians **4**, because Paul regards the “**gods**” and “**rulers**” of verses **eight and nine** as “persons”. Says Paul, “Have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth, that **they** zealously affect you badly. Yes, **they** would exclude you (from the adoption of sons, 4:5) that ye might affect **them** (“be entranced by **them**” = “be **their** zealots” – *autous dzehloute*)”, 4:16-18. “**They**” are nowhere in the **foregoing context** indicated **but as the “gods that by nature are no gods”, “weak and beggarly rulers or principles”, indeed the “principles or rulers of the world”, 4:5. Verses 17 and 18 clarify and exemplify what Paul has earlier stated in verse 9.** “You desire to be in bondage again **to those things you used to be enslaved to** in observing days and months and seasons and years ... **to those things** (– *tois*, personal pronoun) **who** by

nature are **no-gods** ... weak and beggarly **principles** (rulers / powers / elements – *stoichehia*)”.

8.3.1.3.2. “These Things Are An Allegory”

Paul writes to people from the same background – Gentiles. They were “**gendered = born under bondage**”.²⁴ Then Paul “at the first preached the Gospel” to them.¹³ “Don’t you hear what the Law says?”²¹ The Law says, “He of the freewoman is born of the promise!”² “These things (what the Law says) are an **allegory**”, says Paul.^{24a} Those born “after the flesh”^{23a} are “born unto bondage”, 24b. The Galatian converts received a second mother, Jerusalem which is above, (the) **free**.²⁶ “Jerusalem above”, **the Christian Faith**, is “mother of **us all**” – Jews and Gentiles.²⁶ “We now, brethren, (I, Paul, reckon myself as being born of Agar, as being brother of her sons.) **as Isaac**, are the children of promise!”²⁸ But the Gentiles who also had become “children of the promise”, were **forsaking their Christian “liberty”** (5:1) only to “become entangled **again** with the yoke of (their **former**) bondage”. **They surrendered their adoption of sons**⁵ for bondage under the elements (“rulers”, “principles”) of the world.³ They traded their blessedness¹⁵ for animosity.¹⁶

This “yoke of bondage” of 5:1. Paul calls that bondage “to the weak and beggarly principles of the world” in 4:3 and 9! In 5:2 Paul tells these erstwhile Gentile heathen and pagans, “Listen, I, Paul, tell you, you may circumcise yourselves, but Christ shall profit you nothing!”^{5:2} On the contrary, you will be worse off, “For I guarantee you, everyone circumcised is under obligation to keep the whole Law perfectly”.^{5:3} To have yourselves circumcised exempt you not, protects you not, pardons you not. **You only bring yourselves under greater judgement**. In fact, “Christ has become of no benefit to you”.^{5:4}

But why is Paul so severe and strict? He nowhere else in his letters so sternly denounces the circumcised. He in fact himself had Timothy circumcised. He said he would become like the Jews if for their salvation, as he would become like a heathen if for their salvation. Why would he not allow others the same adaptability? Why would Paul fear that “All my labour on you will be of no avail”?^{4:11}

They made it their own burden to work out their salvation. “Whosoever is justified by the law have actually fallen from grace”. How can one be justified by something one is an offender of, by that which condemns? It is simple. If the Law should justify, one is **doubly damned**. Circumcision of oneself only **seals** one’s already sure doom because man by Law is a sinner **already**. God shall not be mocked nor intimidated! “When you are in Jesus Christ, to be circumcised or not helps you nothing”.^{5:6} **Circumcision brings you not into Christ**. If you are in

Him, He exclusively is your justification and your salvation. “Faith that by the love of Christ works”, does avail. “You have done well so far. Who then hindered you that you will not obey the truth? This persuasion you have not received from Him who called you.”^{5:8} “God who sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, **He** is calling, Father, Father!”^{4:6} “I have confidence in you (“persuaded of better things concerning you”, Hebrews) through the Lord, that you will be like-minded. And for certain he that troubled you shall suffer the judgement of the Lord whoever he might be.” (“Whoever he might be ...” Paul all along had been speaking about things as persons!)

8.3.1.3.3. Syncretism

“*Some Galatian Christians*” did **two** things, they “*had themselves circumcised*”, and they “*had begun to “observe days, and months, and seasons, and years”*”. These backsliders though, “*had begun*” by “observation (not “observance”!) of days, and months, and seasons, and years”, and **then, to crown their arrogance**, they also had themselves circumcised.

Paul in Galatians addresses **two conglomerated issues, within the Church**, one clearly of **Judaistic** sentiment and the other just as clearly an inclination to **heathen** habits. These should not be confused or identified. An unprejudiced survey of the whole letter and its main concerns makes it easy and simple to realise that there had been **different philosophies behind** the different **manifestations of error**. They were distinct but combined were even deadlier sins. The two errors have **traditionally** been **identified** and the **standard** interpretation of the phrase, “You observe days, months, seasons and years”, has been that these time-cycles were “Jewish Sabbaths”. Those who “observed” them were “Judaistic”, and so “**Judaism**” is **incorporated into the Galatians religion**. But in Galatians the “Judaism”-aspect is not derived from idolatrous days, but from circumcision. “Observers” of these cosmic time-cycles at the time need not have been Jews because Gentiles as converted but backsliding Christians could just as well have entertained enthusiasm for (“Jewish”) “days”. As for the issue of circumcision, Paul supposes an adult practice. All Jews were circumcised as eight days olds and could not have had themselves circumcised as adults. Those who “*had themselves circumcised*” had to have been **Gentiles**.

It is clear that while Paul writes chapter 5, chapter 4 is prominent in his mind constantly. **The circumcision** Paul in chapter 5 speaks of for **no moment** loses its relation with the **backsliding** he in chapter 4 speaks of. These persons are not circumcised in order **to enter** the Church. They **are** the Church, **as uncircumcised**, but now are corrupted by being circumcised. They have themselves circumcised **so as to make good for their backsliding** into heathen observation of horoscopic days.

The **main reason** why Paul shows the backsliders **no mercy** is that the Galatians as the Church of Jesus Christ has **added to its idolatry, audacity**. The professing Christian Body of worshippers **left its post, returned to idolatry** and now **tempts God, defying his judgement**. *We shall have ourselves circumcised and force the hand of God. We will live a double life of sin and piety. While sticking to our old pagan ways we will be Jews as well as Christians*. Learned men call this misfeasance “**syncretism**”. In Paul’s eyes it was nothing but the worst form of **hypocrisy**. *You may call yourselves Christians. But I tell you, you are not. “You are cut off from Christ.” Your pretence I Paul see through. Do you think God does not? Well, then you are mistaken for what you are busy with is idolatry, well may it be circumcised idolatry, Judaised paganism, but idolatry non the less!*

8.3.1.4.

Irreconcilable Polemic

“*In many respects the polemic in Galatians 4:8-11 is strikingly similar to that of Colossians 2:8-23.*”

Any similarity there might be does not seem to “ <i>respect polemic</i> ”.		
<u>Romans 14:5-6</u>	<u>Colossians 2:16-17</u>	<u>Galatians 4:9-10</u>
An internal Church matter	An external menace	An unholy mongrelism
Church divided	Wordly principles of philosophy	Weak and beggarly principles
Judged one another	“Don’t be judged by any man”	Judged by God
Paul addresses various parties in the Church	Paul addresses “you” the Church as well as “any” outside the Church	Paul addresses the whole Church
He admonishes all parties	He reassures the Church but warns for proper perspective	He condemns all haughty
Whether one day or every day - the kingdom of God is not eating	Go on! Feast! But these things are but a shadow!	I fear my labour was in vain! You’re cut off from Christ!

“*In both places (Gl.4:9-10 and Col.2:16) the superstitious observance of sacred times is described as slavery to the “elements”. In Galatians, however, the denunciation of the “false teachers” is stronger. They are regarded as “accursed” (Gal 1:8,9) because they were teaching a “different gospel”. Their teaching that the observance of days and seasons was necessary to justification and salvation perverted the very heart of the Gospel (Gal 5:4).*” Prof. Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Sabbath in the New Testament*, p. 121, par. a

“In both places (Gl.4:9-10 and Col.2:16) the superstitious observance of sacred times is described as slavery to the “elements”.” In **Galatians** the observation of times indeed is *“superstitious”*, and *“sacred”* to pagan beliefs. It should rightly be regarded *“as slavery to the “elements”.*” (Thus again, *“elements”* are personified. *“Elements”* are the slave-masters.) But in Colossians there is a world’s difference because there Paul propounds the **innocent and free Christian feasting of divinely** ordained sacred occasions. Nowhere and no how in Colossians is this holy feasting of Christ’s freemen *“described as slavery to the “elements”.*” Rather, it is there **defended** against being incriminated against by the *“cosmic rulers”*. **No resemblance** with Galatians’ superstitious times exists in Colossians.

“Their teaching that the observance of days and seasons was necessary to justification and salvation perverted the very heart of the Gospel (Gal 5:4).” By their practice of observance of superstitious times the Galatians proved their defying the justification and salvation that is the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Theirs was

not merely a perversion of the Gospel, but its negation, denial and defiance. The Galatians forsook the Gospel of Christ for the idolatry of their former pagan heathendom. That is what the **plain language** of 4:9-10 conveys. And the plain language of 5:1 and further states that these backsliders added to their backsliding the **presumptuous and defying abuse of the Abrahamic sign**, circumcision. But Paul refuses such **malpractice**. “They which be of **faith** are blessed with the faithful Abraham (not they that forsake faithfulness to God) ... for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth **not** in **all** things which are written in the book of the Law to **do** them”. You cannot claim the blessings while despising the blessings’ claim on you. The Law shall be your enemy, “for as many as are of the works of the Law are under its curse”. (3:9-10)

“Paul’s concern is not to expose the superstitious ideas attached to these observances, but rather to challenge the whole system of salvation which the Galatians’ false teachers had devised. By conditioning justification and acceptance with God to such things as circumcision and the observance of days and seasons, the Galatians were making salvation dependent upon human achievement. This for Paul is a betrayal of the Gospel: “You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace” (Gal 5:4).” 122, c.

I cannot see how *“Paul’s concern is not to expose the superstitious ideas attached to these observances”*, *“but rather to challenge the whole system of salvation which the Galatians’ false teachers had devised”*.

Paul is as concerned *“to expose the superstitious ideas attached to these observances”*, as he is *“to challenge the whole system of salvation which the Galatians’ false teachers had devised”*. The false teachers for Paul are none other than the Galatians Church, and *“the superstitious ideas attached to these observances”* are none but those of the Galatians Church.

Paul doesn’t confront individuals as much as he combats ideologies. He exposes the idolatrous “principles” **basic to** observance of superstitious times. He challenges the Galatians’ syncretistic system of pagan worship and abuse of the Mosaic Law for perverted ideological advantage. *Paul’s concern* clearly and emphatically *is to expose the superstitious ideas attached to these observances.* He *challenges the whole system of error and godlessness the Galatians’ false teachers had devised.* Christianity cannot be compromised. Even if one were a son of Abraham by self-inflicted “mutilation” of the body (= “circumcision”), it could not persuade God to justify the ungodly and faithless. The Law cannot save one, it can only condemn one. One cannot, against the Law, worship God while worshipping idols physical or ideological.

The theological misconception must be rejected that Paul in 3:10 says that unless one keeps the whole law perfectly it cannot save one. Such a supposition implies that if one keeps or could keep the law perfectly, it is possible to be saved through perfect keeping of the law. Paul speculates not. What he says, he means, that God gave the Law for any and all “to continue in all things that are written in the book of the Law to do them”. And he confirms this Biblical fact of “The Law”, saying, “That no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God is evident, for (it is written in the Law) ‘The just shall live by faith’.” **It is not a matter whether he keeps it perfectly or not.** “The man that keeps the Law shall live therein”, 11-12. The man that believes God’s Law must keep it and does keep it. Paul says **no more or any different.** He **means, suggests, implies** or **insinuates** no more or any different. Man, the law of God is there for you to obey. It is your life-long duty. “Don’t you know the Law has dominion over man as long as he lives?” (Ro.7:1) **And if you belong to God you so much the more obey the Law!** Of course it is not there to save you. The Law is conditional of man’s duty, not of his salvation. “Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” any honest man looking at himself in the light of **Christ Jesus, must** cry out. **He does not come to realise his helplessness through beholding the Law!** Man shall be saved in Jesus Christ by grace though faith. That is the whole Gospel, the full Gospel - the **only** Gospel. Paul’s is the Gospel, the Gospel he preached and taught in his Letters, **as here in Galatians.** “I through the Law am dead to the Law that I may live unto God!” (2:19). *Therefore, o man, don’t think you’re at liberty to break God’s Law*

servicing your erstwhile idols and then **boast God's Law** having yourselves circumcised as though the Law could justify your breaking it. **The Law could not justify you for its keeping how much less for its breaking!** You cannot be justified for breaking the Law. The Law confirms you in your lost state of idolatry and weak and beggarly debt and servitude. The Law is the harshest disciplinarian at the command of God! (3:24) **You, o Galatians, think that the Law will not kill if disobeyed, but in the face of God will pardon in its provocation? Are you mad!** "O foolish Galatians, who have bewitched you that you will not obey the truth? There is no one but yourselves to be blamed, you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth as among you crucified?" "You are cut off from Christ!" (5:2)

"By conditioning justification and acceptance with God to such things as circumcision and the observance of days and seasons, the Galatians were making salvation dependent upon human achievement."

I think Prof. Bacchiocchi does not grasp the seriousness of the Galatians' heresy. He understands it as something synergistic like Pelagianism. "*Making salvation dependent upon human achievement*" in essence of course, is idolatry, but it is not as mockingly arrogant as **to seal one's relapse into idolatry with the holy institution of circumcision**. Paul for no moment finds fault with the Abrahamic covenant sign, but with its **abuse**, namely **to wed the Christian Faith with paganism**. In Colossians the "*false teachers*" boasted "*human achievement*", "perfection", "fullness", true "wisdom" etc. In Galatians the defect reached tragic proportions. Paul commends a defensive mood in Colossians. In Galatians he laments a seemingly irrevocable, "weak and beggarly" decadence. Again one and all must witness in awe the triumph of the Gospel, in view of the fact that Christianity must have heeded Paul's plea and had then put away its false gods and superstitious "days and months and seasons and years". (Or am I rejoicing too soon?)

Galatians is Paul's earliest Letter. Time up to the writing of the letter **lacked** for the Church to have developed a sophisticated "Christian" heretical dogma that might be likened to Pelagianism. It was **raw heathen worship** that lured the first isolated and frail Christians away from their New Way back to their old, as they must have thought, **mighty and worldly**, "principles" and "rules and rulers" and "gods". Like in the Ephesians Church, membership at some stage must have dropped sharply (See Paragraph 7.1.9.) and like in the Church in Corinth, doctrine must have degraded alarmingly. (See Paragraph 7.1.8, 1Cor.12.) *By such things as circumcision and the observance of days and seasons, the Galatians were* actually sacrificing the Gospel of Christ and saving grace in return for their **former status and practice** without hope and without God in the world. They lost hold on salvation and even their human

achievement must have suffered as a result. There is no *conditioning of justification and acceptance with God* but on Christian principle, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ only, or it exposes itself a "weak and beggarly principle" and "servitude" to "gods that are no-gods". Paul wrote his letter to defend the Gospel. And it seems the Gospel proved the victor in the Galatians Church because Paul never had to write a second and even more letters like he was forced to do through the heresies of the Corinthian Church (that were also forms of idolatry).

8.3.1.4.1. **Irreconcilable Times**

Prof. Bacchiocchi says the Galatians "*conditioned*" "*justification and acceptance with God*" "*to such things as circumcision and the observance of days and seasons*" and thereby "*were making salvation dependent upon human achievement*". That means Prof. Bacchiocchi places "*the observance of days and seasons*" within the scope of normal Christian practice. He supposes the only thing wrong about the Galatians' "*observance of days and seasons*" in their normal scope of Christian practice was that they, through it, "*were making salvation dependent upon human achievement*." (That to an extent was the problem in Colossians, not in Galatians: '*... just remember these things, eating drinking, feasting, resting, are but a shadow of what awaits the Body of Christ.*') **Paul gives no hint that that is what he means here in Galatians**. Had these times been permissible and "Lawful" for Christians, Paul would have had no reason to doubt or judge the Galatians' observance of "*such things*". It is hard to imagine how **duty and privilege** can condition Christian salvation or make of it "*human achievement*". It is easy to understand how **salvation** "*conditioned*" on **no** "*human achievement*", can determine Christian duty though! The whole thrust of Paul's argument requires that the times "observed" are **not** "Christian".

That the times were not even "**Jewish**" but **pagan** is obvious in the first place from the **context** within which Paul mentions them. Says Paul, "After you got to know God or rather after that you had been visited by God's grace, HOW do you **turn back to** the weak and beggarly rulers (– gods that by nature are no gods, 8) unto whom you desire to be in bondage **all over**? You look to days, months, seasons and years *as if these are gods and could determine your destiny.*"

"I am afraid that I have bestowed my labour upon you **in vain**" – insinuating the Galatians' former lost state as well as the cosmic gods' seeming success in enticing the Galatians away from the Gospel. The times which the Galatians "observed", were **pagan divinations**. They **before** had known "days, months, seasons and years" **only** in association with the "world" of idolatrous "gods" and "rulers". Paul doesn't judge the Church for keeping "days" or times of **Old Testament** institution! Paul

begs the Galatians to be like him and to remember how they at first, when they were still heathen Gentiles, received him **as though he was an angel** (4:12, 14). That indicates what kind of worship the Galatians were used to and were now returning back to. These “**times**” were idolatrous because **what the Galatians in practice did** with and through these times, only allows for superstitious and idolatrous divinations and “bewitching”. They would **serve no purpose** under Christianity even like those “**gods**” would serve no purpose under Christianity.

“It is generally agreed that the Galatians’ observance of sacred times was motivated by superstitious beliefs in astral influences. This is suggested by Paul’s charge that their adoption of these practices was tantamount to a return to their pagan subjection to elemental spirits and demons (Gal 4:8-9). Apparently, on account of their pagan background, the Galatians, as aptly stated by W. Rordorf, ‘could discern in the particular attention paid by the Jews to certain days and seasons nothing more than religious veneration paid to stars and natural forces.’” p.122b.

Scholars do not admit frankly what they admit with clever cover-up for saving face. To frankly admit the plain truth would be tantamount to capitulation of their applying this Scripture against the Sabbath. Prof. Bacchiocchi simply takes for granted and states that the “**times**” the Galatians “**observed**” were not “**sacred**”. The “**times**” the Galatians “**observed**”, were **not** “**sacred**” “according to the Scriptures” or because they were “holy to the Lord”. They in fact were “**sacred**” because they were “*motivated by superstitious beliefs in astral influences*”! The Galatians’ “*adoption of these practices*” was not “**tantamount to a return**” but a **real, total** and seemingly **irrevocable** “*return to their pagan subjection*”. The Galatians’ “*observance of sacred times*” (according to Rordorf clearly “*discern(ed) in the particular attention paid by the Jews*”) was a no vague return “*to elemental spirits and demons*”, but to “gods that by nature (were) no gods” but “cosmic” and “elemental” deities. **Through their very “divination of days, months, seasons and years” the Galatians committed idolatry.** Their “gods” possessed all the essentials of “*elemental spirits and demons*”, so that Paul calls them “weak and beggarly rules or rulers” (principles / “elementals”). It wasn’t simply “*Paul’s charge*”, but **fact**. *On account of their pagan background, the Galatians paid particular attention to certain days and seasons discerned in the definite religious veneration of stars and natural forces.*

From where does Rordorf get the idea that “*the Jews paid attention to*” these “*days and seasons*”? **From his imagination, and from so many others who have so imagined before him!** O yes, the Jews were prone to *paying particular attention to certain days and seasons besides* or rather **instead** of the certain days and seasons that **God** ordained for their observance. Their Old Testament history confirms the tragic truth.

But **in the context of Galatians** there’s no indication of **Jewish** veneration of such things. To bring the Jews into the picture is quite willfully the interpreter’s own idea, in this case, Willie Rordorf’s.

“Whether or not the Sabbath is alluded to in Galatians depends upon interpretation of “days” (hemera – Gal 4:10)”, Bacchiocchi continues. *“Some critics argue on the basis of the parallel passage of Colossians 2:16, where “sabbaths” are explicitly mentioned, that the ‘days’ certainly indicate even the Sabbaths. We do not deny this possibility, but we have shown earlier that the plural “sabbaths” used in Colossians was the common designation not only for the Sabbath day but also for the whole week. Thus, the plural “days” of Galatians could well indicate that the Colossians’ “sabbaths” are “week-days” and not vice versa. If Paul in Galatians 4:10 meant the Jewish festivals, why did he not give them their customary names as he does in Colossian 2:16?”*

Only the last remark is of integrity. It is the obvious question from which to start one’s investigation as to the meaning of the Galatians phrase, “days, months, seasons and years”. *“If Paul in Galatians 4:10 meant the Jewish festivals, why did he not give them their customary names as he does in Colossians 2:16?”*

There shall be found but a single “*parallel*” of the phrase, “days, like months, like seasons, like years” in all of Scripture – and it is **not** the Colossians phrase, “feasts, new moons, Sabbath Days”.

Not only is the **order** in Colossians – first the longest, “feasts” cycle, last the shortest, “days” – out of order. In Galatians the shortest cycle, “days”, is mentioned first, and the longest, “years”, last.

The **kind** of periods has nothing in common. In Colossians they are by the name Jewish or Old Testament occasions of feasting / eating and drinking. In Galatians there is nothing of such nature. On the contrary, in Galatians the cyclic periods mentioned pose a threat to those who “observe” – the threat of them being brought under the “bondage” of “weak and beggarly rulers” and “no-gods”.

Also the **number** of things mentioned is wrong – four in Galatians, three in Colossians; or just two if “New Moons” and “Sabbaths” are taken for the “Feasts” meant; or just one, if “Feasts” are explained, “New Moons” and “Sabbaths”.

So is the **nature** of things mentioned – **cosmic cycles of times** in Galatians, **occasions** of worship (Old Testament) in Colossians.

So is the **association** – with idolatry in Galatians, with worship of the true God in Colossians.

So is the **attitude** of the champions – defensive and reserved in Colossians, defying and audacious in Galatians.

So is the **atmosphere** – with regard to things mentioned in Colossians, free and feasting; with regard to things mentioned in Galatians, slavish and fearing!

So, which is that **single Scripture** that shows similarity with our Galatians 4:10 phrase? It is found in **Genesis 1:14-19**. “And God said, Let the lights in the firmament of heaven be **to divide** the day from the night; and let the signs (the moon-phases) be to divide seasons, and let the days (of the moon) be to divide years. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and it was so. And God made two great lights **to rule**, the greater: to rule the day; and the lesser – also the stars: to rule the night. And **God set them** to give light in the firmament of the heaven, and upon the earth to rule over the day and over the night, and upon the earth to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”

The perversion of this very order that God set **for nature**, to be “divided” and “ruled” by the heavenly bodies, has through all ages been the **core of idolatry**. From the beginning God also set the rule and order and division of time for **true worship**. **True worship was not** to be ruled by these “rulers” of nature or “cosmic elements”. **God’s own work and rest, He by own Lordly Rule**, “blessed” and “set apart” the “Seventh Day”. God “perfecting” the “Seventh Day” – “**divided**” by **no astral cycles** – and **God**, appointed it, “holy”.

Similarity between **Galatians’ order** of things and the **perversion** of the Divine Creation-Order (Genesis 1) is apparent.

As in Genesis 1, in Galatians 4:10 the “**seasons**” of “days, months, seasons, years”, are **divided** by **moon-cycles** or “signs”. (“He appointed the moon for seasons”, Ps.104:19. “Signs” in Genesis indicate the moon as neither the sun nor stars “signals” by phases.) As in Genesis 1, in Galatians the “**years**” of “days, months, seasons, years”, are **divided** by **day-cycles**.

The **number** of things mentioned in Genesis – four, are four in Galatians. If counted as grouped, the number is two in Genesis. If considered in chiasmic order, “days / years”, A / D, months / seasons”, B / C, the number is the same in Galatians: two.

So is the **nature** of things mentioned – cosmic-cycles in Genesis, cosmic-cycles in Galatians.

So is **association** – in Genesis, “rule” or “principles” and earth, sun, moon and stars. In Galatians, “rule” or “principles” and the philosophic “cosmic elements”.

So are the **attitudes** towards the things mentioned naturally opposites – protection and approval in Genesis, apathy and disdain in Galatians.

So is the **language** naturally opposite with regard to the things mentioned – in Genesis, God by nature True God speaking – “Let there be” heavenly bodies, “to rule” and to serve – “to give light”. In Galatians, “gods by nature no-gods”, cosmic cycles and bodies, “manifest” (5:19) unto “bondage” and “servitude”, and, in defiance of God, “divined” (“observed” = worshipped).

The question “*Whether or not the Sabbath is alluded to in Galatians*”, scarcely need “*depend upon interpretation of “days” (hemera)*”. Not in the way Prof. Bacchiocchi minces matters.

“*We have shown earlier that the plural “sabbaths” used in Colossians was the common designation not only for the Sabbath day but also for the whole week. Thus, the plural “days” of Galatians could well indicate that the Colossians’ “sabbaths” are “week-days” and not vice versa.*” We have shown (See Paragraph 8.2.2.5.2.1 towards its end.) that the plural “sabbaths” used in Colossians was the common designation for Old Testament “Feast”-Sabbath-days and that it was **never ever** used for the whole week. “*That the plural “sabbaths” used in Colossians was the common designation not only for the Sabbath day but also for the whole week*”, is an unfounded allegation. The word *sabbaton / sabbatohn*, where in the New Testament used by itself always and only means the Sabbath Day. Only when used **with the numeral** (like “first” – *mian / miai*), does it in the New Testament refer to the (First) Day (of the week, Sunday). When Paul says “days” in Galatians (and in Colossians) he does not mean the Sabbath or the week or any of its days. He means “days” as in its contextual setting, that of idolatrous practice and worldview in Galatians; that of Jewish festival in Colossian (and Romans).

Thus, the plural “days” of **Galatians** could **never ever** indicate that the **Colossians’ “sabbaths” are “week-days” and never ever as well, vice versa!** Prof. Bacchiocchi in fact contradicts himself literally or I lack the sense to see congruity in his argument, for, says he, “*the plural “sabbaths” used in Colossians was the common designation ... also for the whole week. Thus, the plural “days” of Galatians could well indicate that the Colossians’ “sabbaths” are “week-days” and not vice versa*”.

“*Some critics argue on the basis of the parallel passage of Colossians 2:16, where “sabbaths” are explicitly mentioned, that the “days” certainly indicate even the Sabbaths. We do not deny this possibility*”, says Prof Bacchiocchi not speaking for everybody, please note. Firstly we deny the possibility of calling Colossians 2:16 and Galatians 4:10 “*parallel passages*” and our whole endeavour attempts to show just that. That “*the “days” (of Gal.4:10) certainly indicate even the Sabbaths*”, we deny for every reason already stated above and still being stated here. The hypothesis exists and persists but on strength of tradition and to serve tradition.

The question “whether or not the Sabbath is alluded to in Galatians”, exegetically rather *depends upon interpretation of the phrase* “days and months and seasons and years”. **As a unitary and unique expression**, only the “parallel” phrase in the Genesis 1 story of the Fourth Day comes to mind. The “days” of Galatians contextually, etymologically and theologically show no similarity with “Jewish” or “sabbath” “days”. “If Paul in Galatians 4:10 meant the Jewish festivals, why did he not give them their customary names as he does in Colossians 2:16?” remains the only valid question.

“It is within this context that Paul’s denouncement of the observance of days and seasons must be understood”, says Prof. Bacchiocchi on p.122 d. We must qualify this observation with yet another **disagreement and denial** of Prof. Bacchiocchi’s statements, that “Paul’s concern is not to expose the superstitious ideas attached to these observances ...”, and with an occasional **agreement**, that “Paul’s concern”, in fact, “is ... to challenge the whole system of salvation which the Galatians’ false teachers had devised”. “The whole system of salvation which the Galatians’ false teachers had devised” was one of idolatrous, pagan **worship**. “The observance of days and seasons must be understood” “within the context” of that, “whole” **idolatrous** “system of salvation”.

“If the motivations for these observances would not have undermined the vital principle of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, Paul would only have recommended tolerance and respect (as he does in Romans 14), even if some ideas were foreign to Old Testament teaching.” We could add, *even if some ideas were foreign to New Testament teaching* as in Colossians 2:16. But seeing the worst was fast becoming reality in the Galatians Church, Paul drew the sword against the real “enemy”. “Am I become your enemy?” he asks the Galatians while he makes war upon the enemies of the only true God and true salvation! It implies Paul’s combating of **false gods** (“gods by nature non-gods”) as of false teachers (“whoever he might be”) and false teachings (“weak and beggarly principles”). Paul views the “whole system” as one Personified False Deity. The “whole system” “adulterated the very ground of salvation”. “The motivations for these practices”, “the perverted use of cultic observations which were designed to promote salvation ...” almost captures every expression and word we in this study will soon employ while indicating that in Galatians 4:9-10 **idolatry was the object of Paul’s opposition and the subject of the Galatians’ surrender**. Note already at this point our full agreement with Prof. Bacchiocchi’s choice of words, “cultic observations” instead of “observances”. To the present writer it is incomprehensible how Prof. Bacchiocchi could not allow or even consider the simplicity and satisfaction that the concept of “idolatry”

with regard to the “whole system” affords the exegeses of the passage.

Says Prof. Bacchiocchi, “The perverted use of cultic observations which were designed to promote salvation as a human achievement rather than as a divine gift of grace.” (p. 122/123, emphasis CGE) The reach of **Paul’s** intention, is that *the perverted use of cultic observations were designed to promote salvation as an achievement of “no-gods” and “principles” or “rulers” or “powers”*. It excludes the *divine gift of grace* of the only true God and Father of our **Lord Jesus Christ**. *The perverted use of cultic observations was designed to promote servitude to idolatry*. Practically that would come down to **human achievement as failure and damnation**. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was at the loosing end. It was defamed and maimed. It was adulterated as it used to be fornicated by idolatry for many ages before. Man at heart changed nothing for the better through time. He at heart and by nature is an idolater. So were the Galatians. Only as Christians their circumstance was more trying, their position more vulnerable. **They heard the Gospel the first time in a sea of pagans and stronghold of heathen “philosophy” and “powers” or “principles”**. It was “gods” against God. Who would judge them? **Paul** did – to snatch them from the fire for Christ. It required not *human achievement*, but the almighty power of the grace of God in Jesus Christ ... and a Paul, to bring them back. “My little children, of whom I travail in birth until Christ again be formed in you”, 4:19.

“In the final analysis, Paul’s attitude toward the Sabbath must be determined not on the basis of his denunciation of heretical and superstitious observances ...”. (p. 123 e) By saying this Prof. Bacchiocchi implicitly admits the Sabbath cannot be classed under the “days” of Galatians 4:10. But Prof. Bacchiocchi is correct in concluding, “heretical and superstitious observances may have influenced Sabbathkeeping”. The problem is that he supposes this influence to have been the work of **Judaistic “false teachers”** and not of **pagan philosophy and worship**. The problem further is that he diminishes idolatry to “salvation” as an attempt of “human achievement” and therefore by “observance of sacred days”. Prof. Bacchiocchi fails to see into the furthest stretches of the abyss into which Jesus Christ had to reach to save the backsliding Galatians. (“the greatest distance that is recoverable by grace”, John Owen) He had to bring the “weak and beggarly” up twice into the glory of his presence. Observance of sacred days would have been their Christian freedom, as with the Colossian Church – were those “sacred days” Christian or even Old Testament sacred days. But now they are from the lowest realms of spiritual darkness, “you venerate and fear days, like months, like seasons, like years”.

We may as well at this point quote from Prof. Bacchiocchi’s “Conclusion”, “The failure to understand that Paul rejects the law as a

method of salvation but upholds it as a moral standard of Christian conduct has been the root-cause of much misunderstanding of Paul's attitude toward the law in general and toward the Sabbath in particular". No statement could be more factual and relevant. But it is our conviction that the "root-cause of much misunderstanding" as far as Galatians is concerned is to in any way bring the Law under discussion as the subject of contention in 4:9-10 in particular and in Galatians at large. Paul argues not about the Law, but about the Galatians' arrogant, of their own motivations, and for their own purposes, **abuse of Law**. They say, "See, o God, with your own holy institution and seal of fidelity, circumcision, we have sealed ourselves as your sons and heirs." But, as Paul says in **5:13**, 'Only don't use your liberty for licence'! Don't, like the rich young man, turn again to your idols while as if by my own Kingly proclamation your Master and God I am forced to take you sons and heirs!' Paul teaches nothing different than Jesus' teaching, "Your faith has saved you. Go! And **sin no more!**" Paul in Galatians confirms the Law by exactly his incidental reference to it. For no moment, by not so much as a single word or thought, does Paul discuss the Law for the sake of the Law itself, whether it is binding still and binding for Christians or not. That, altogether, is not his point!

8.3.2.1.

Idolatry Generally Acknowledged, Then, Denied!

"In verse 8 two sets of contrasts are in play. Formerly the Galatians were in a state of bondage. In a sense this could be understood: (not merely temporal but causal also) they did not know God. Now they may rejoice in freedom. If they do not do so – well, that cannot be understood. For they have now come to the knowledge of God. What the Gentiles in their unconverted condition" (... total estrangement ... involving the whole of human existence ...) knew about God (Rom. 1:19-21) was not the true knowledge of God that is possible only through faith in Christ. From this want of true knowledge issued the life of slavish fear, and a worship of them that by nature are no gods. The apostle calls them gods, for so they were generally referred to. But in the same breath he says that in essence, according to their real nature, they are not gods. The reference is to idols of polytheistic paganism which the Galatians had formerly served.

Now there is no explanation to be given of their conduct, or any justification of it. They have learned to know God, 'have come to know God', that is, as He is in Christ. Better still: they have been known by God. The bond uniting them with God was not established by them but by God himself. He had wanted to know them as His own, interested Himself in their behalf, had chosen them. (This time, 'gnohntes', not 'eidontes', is used. It points out the beginning of the great change. Moreover, the

'gnohntes', like the 'eidontes', speaks of a very particular relationship, such as that which God effects. ... This knowledge has not the quality of a mystical union in the sense of the Hellenistic cultus-mysticism, but signifies the acceptance of God's grace on the basis of what happened at Christ's coming.)

8.3.2.2. Verse 10

Verse 10 tells us in what this service of the rudiments consists, namely, in the observation of all kinds of ceremonial regulations, most specifically the one stipulating holy seasons. Inasmuch as Paul's argument is entirely directed against Judaism, the 'days' presumably refer to sabbath-days, the 'months' to the days of the new moon, the 'seasons' to the Jewish feasts, and the 'years' to the sabbath and jubilee years ... The intent of the apostle is to say that they had taken over the whole system. The summing up of them all, the cumulative heaping up, is intended to express what is quantitatively legalistic in their course of conduct. And all this they are now busy painstakingly reintroducing.

Paul expresses the fear that the trouble he has gone to for their sakes has been bestowed in vain. For the issue is one of basic principle. It is not the observation (sic.) of religious usages as such (cf. 1 Cor. 16:2 and Acts 20:7) that is the bone of contention, but the basis of the justification before God. The issue is: Judaism with its auto-soteriological, legalistic scheme of redemption or the gospel of free grace. These two are irreconcilable. They must choose between them. Otherwise all of Paul's trouble and exertion for their sakes will prove futile." Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, Eerdmans, 1978. (Emphasis CGE)

I can only try to explain better how Ridderbos **contradicts** himself by concentrating the essentials **under a quick glance:**

<u>Formerly</u>	<u>Now</u>
the Galatians were in a state of bondage They did not know God	they may rejoice in freedom they have now come to the knowledge of God
Gentiles in their unconverted condition of total estrangement involving the whole of human existence	They have been known by God The bond uniting them with God established by God himself. that signifies the acceptance of God's grace
What they knew about God was not the true knowledge of God From this want of true knowledge	They have learned to know God as He is in Christ True knowledge only through faith in Christ
issued the life of slavish fear and a worship of them that by nature, in essence, are no gods.	He had wanted to know them as His own They have been known by God.

The ‘gnohtes’, like the ‘eidontes’,

*has not the quality of Hellenistic
cultus-mysticism
it refers not to idols, generally known
as gods of polytheistic paganism
which the Galatians had served
formerly.*

Now there is no explanation to be given of their conduct, or any justification of it.

*speaks of a very particular
relationship
that is possible only on the basis of
what happened at Christ's coming
God interested Himself in their behalf
Now ...*

After this beautiful and authentic illustration of the Galatians’ **pagan past** and **Christian conversion**, Ridderbos suddenly **looses track**. What **he** plunges into I’ll note down in the right-hand column. What **Paul concludes** from his own argument thus far, I’ll note down in the left-hand column.

Verse 10 tells us in what this service of the rudiments consists, namely,

*in the observance of stipulated
cosmic times-cycles
under “servitude” to “gods by nature no
gods”.*
Paul generally describes them as
“weak and beggarly principles **of the world**”
‘days’ refer to “**signs ... seasons; days ...
years**”
“ruled” and “divided”
by “lights in the firmament of the heaven”
**perverted, in “servitude” to “cosmic”
“gods”.**

*“in the observance of all kinds of
ceremonial regulations,
most specifically holy seasons.
Inasmuch as Paul’s argument is entirely
directed
against Judaism
the ‘days’ presumably refer to sabbath-
days,
the ‘months’ to the days of the new moon,
the ‘seasons’ to the Jewish feasts, and
the ‘years’ to the sabbath- and jubilee
years.*

Paul’s Intent

*The intent of the apostle is to
say that polytheistic paganism
had taken over the whole
system.*

The intent of the apostle is to say that
Jewish Sabbaths
had taken over the whole system.

Paul had no trouble finding words to name the “*the Jewish feasts*”, “Feasts, New Moons, Sabbaths”, in **Colossians**. Why should he, if he meant “*the Jewish feasts*”, in **Galatians** find it impossible to indicate them with this **usual and peculiar** nomenclature, “Feasts, New Moons, Sabbaths”? Did Paul find it impossible? Fact is, he does not use the Colossians’ description in Galatians at all. Fact is the Galatians description corresponds with the Genesis description. And fact is, about

every word Paul uses in Galatians 4:8-11 **here and elsewhere** shows peculiar meaning and application in the context of **pagan worship**. (See further on “observe”.) Therefore, yes, Paul does find it **impossible to use any other choice of words** and ideas than what he does use in Galatians 4:8-11. Why should Paul **remind** the Galatians **where they came from – paganism**, if “*now*” they don’t “**return**” to the **paganism** of their “**former**” condition, but to “*Judaism*”? Yes, Paul does blame the Galatians for **circumcising** themselves, **but does he indicate that they reconsidered, returned and stopped or changed direction in backsliding to their “former” state of “serving gods that by nature are no gods”, “weak and beggarly rulers” or “principles”?** Not at all! And **where, contextually**, does Paul blame the Galatians for **circumcising** themselves? **Thirty-two verses and his whole argument** about free grace for the **totally ignorant sons of the bondwoman – heathen pagans – further!**

Paul introduces the subject of circumcision into his discussion **thirty-two verses further** only because the **Galatians** introduced it into **their** scheme of “*syncretistic*” religion, only because **they**, just like Abraham did, tried to override the providence of God. Paul’s argument in the foregoing and following context of verse 10 is “*entirely directed*” **not “against Judaism”**, but against the “*idols*” of solid “*polytheistic paganism*”. He does not refer to “*all kinds of ceremonial regulations*” at all. He refers to the “Law” only after having devoted another **ten verses** to the Galatians’ **heathen past**. And then, when Paul at last mentions the law in 4:21, he stipulates no particular “*ceremonial regulation*”. He continues to discuss the **basic principle** of how anybody in bondage to **idols, and idolatrous philosophies, and idolatrous practices**, could become a freeman – it is the marvel of grace, the fact of God’s free election! Paul finally explains the “liberty wherewith Christ has made us free” in 5:1 and immediately warns **once again**, against getting “entangled **again** with the yoke of bondage” – the very “yoke” of their “former” state of “bondage” under the “world’s principles” and under “gods by nature no gods”. Up to here Paul has **not** referred to **circumcision once**. He **still** speaks of the “bondage”, “**whereunto ye desire again** to be in bondage” – the “bondage” supposed in **verse 9** – “you observe days” etc. “**Now look!**” says Paul right **here** 32 verses later, “*I Paul tell you, that if you have yourselves circumcised its over! Christ is useless to you. There is great irony in this, you who have fallen from grace, that you in your sinning apply the Law to save exactly where it condemns!!*”

Actually Paul argues in defence of the holiness of circumcision and the indefatigability of the Law! God intended circumcision for his divine and holy purpose for the bringing into action and fulfilment his

eternal Covenant of Grace; now the Galatians come and **desecrate it for their weak and beggarly bondage under idols!** They frustrate God's eternal purpose (if it were possible) utterly! *'You are not truly justified. You may think you are. But you refuse to let go your old principles and gods and superstitious bargaining with fate, you actually return to be in bondage to them again, yet you dare to challenge God: 'We will have ourselves circumcised and be justified by your own Law, o God!'* No wonder Paul declares unequivocally, **"You have fallen from grace"**. This unholy marriage between the "world's rulers" and the rules of God's Law indeed is worse than a return to their former status without God and without hope in this world (Eph.2:12). They would not be forgiven. (Read Hebrews 6 from verse 4.)

These "bewitched" Christians added the "Law" of circumcision to their crooked ways, not realising that thereby they **increased their sin** and in no wise could be justified thereby. **Fortunately Paul postulates.** He warns the Galatians, **If this is so**, then Christ shall profit you nothing! In the words of Hebrews 6:9, "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, **though we thus speak**". It shows the absolute consistency of cause and result supposed. It seems Paul's warning was heeded and the Galatians profited from the love of God in Jesus Christ through the Gospel Paul taught them. If they ended the way they started in the freedom they were made free with (5:7) all would be well. But if Paul's fears were for real, then the Galatians' **relapse** into the bondage **which Paul supposes and identifies** and the "*sacred*" "times" **which he refers to and identifies in connection with their bondage**, had everything to do with **heathen** "principles". Then these "times" are "weak and beggarly rulers" – "*sacred*" for reasons that God would never have hallowed, blessed and perfected with the holiness, blessing and perfection of his own Being, own presence and own interest. Then these "days, months, season and years" are not Jewish or Old Testament "*ceremonial regulations*", but **cosmic, superstitious and idolatrous practices, the perversion of God's purpose for the creation-order**-*"signs and seasons, days and years"*.

Contrarily to such absolute conclusion as we have reached, Ridderbos finds it possible to conclude on his part,

"The summing up of them all (holy seasons), the cumulative heaping up, is intended to express what is quantitatively legalistic in their course of conduct. And all this they are now busy painstakingly reintroducing". And, *"inasmuch as Paul's argument is entirely directed against Judaism"*, Paul, according to Ridderbos, finds it possible to reduce the bizarre Galatians affair to the **overdoing yet commonplace** among Christians *"to express what is quantitatively legalistic in their*

course of conduct." And Ridderbos blames the **Jews** for it! **"And all this they are now busy painstakingly reintroducing,"** says he.

Very true, provided one keeps in mind **what "all this"** was about – what it "formerly" **used to be**. It used to be part and parcel – the essence – of "*the whole system*". And Paul painstakingly describes what that "*whole system*" "**formerly**" was.

Asks Paul, **"How is this possible:** When you knew God not you served them that by nature are no gods but idols. (*One could understand that.*) **but now, after you got to know God** (*in Jesus Christ*) – or rather **AFTER YOU CAME TO BE KNOWN BY GOD**, how is it possible that you **NOW turn back** to those weak and beggarly rulers under whom you used to serve in bondage, and **NOW**, desire to serve in bondage **all over again?** You (really) participate in the divination of days, months, seasons and years! (That one could **never** understand!) I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain!"

"All this they are now busy painstakingly reintroducing." **"This"** – and nothing "Jewish"! They "formerly" were not Jewish, but **heathen and pagan**.

Paul expresses the fear that the trouble he went to for the sake of the Galatians had been in vain. For the issue is one of basic principle. It is not the observance of religious usage such as "(sacred) Feasts, New Moons, Sabbaths" that is the bone of contention. It is the **basics of the justification before God, the knowledge and faith of the true God as it is in Christ** and the sending forth of his Spirit into the heart. *The issue at this contextual point is: Paganism with its superstitious and idolatrous "observations" of astral cycles of times topped with the observance of circumcision. Such religion remains a pagan "mutilation of the body" and never could be the practice of the Body that is Christ's!* *The issue is: This "cosmic" scheme of "bondage", or, the gospel of free grace. These two are irreconcilable – mutually exclusive. The Galatians must choose between them. Otherwise all of Paul's trouble and exertion for their sakes will prove futile.* All of Paul's trouble and exertion must prove futile if this basic issue is lost sight of and "the Law" **by abuse** is made the issue. Then come religious Professors and from the Law, select the Seventh Day, "**Sabbath of the Lord your God**", and make it the target of Paul's attack. It is an unthinkable animosity against God's Law and Sabbath which the Church of Christ revels in.

8.3.3.1. “Observances”, Or, “Observations”

The reader will have noticed my use of the word to “divine” for “to observe”. We speak of an “observatory” for the place where the “heavenly bodies” are “observed”. But the word “observe” can have too many other meanings so that the meaning required **purely contextually** in our passage, may come out not precise enough. As seen above, Henry Zylstra accidentally translated Ridderbos with the word “observations” while his intent for certain was not to contrast the difference between “observance” and “observations”. But even the word “observations” allows for a purely “scientific” “study” of astral-logics or astral-metrics where Paul needed a word to express the **religious** connotation the specific word carries within itself.

The thrust of Paul’s argument demands a word that will transfer the idea of **pagan worship** of “**gods that by nature are no gods**” but the creation of man’s imagination. It demands a word that will transfer the idea of “**cosmic rule**” – *stoixeia tou kosmou*, usually translated “elements of the world”. And it demands a word that will transfer the idea of “first principles” or “*(basic) elements / components of the outer space*”.

The “lower” “elemental components” according to Greek philosophy were **earth, water, sky and fire**. There were many such “first principles”. They were viewed as **deities**! The “rulers / principles” of the “heavenly” “cosmos”, were the sun, “ruling” days and years, and the moon and stars “ruling” the “seasons”. These heavenly bodies and the “signs” they gave were meticulously “spied”, for the **welfare and future** of man fully depended on the **favours or omens** determined by and received from these deities. **Their worship constituted the “basics” and fibre of idolatry**. These ominous bodies in fact **were** the very “**gods**” or “**rulers**”. Seen from the standpoint of the Christian Faith, they “**by nature are no-gods**”, that is, they by nature are not **creators** but **created** “things” **made the object of worship!** These in fact were the very “mighty” that of themselves had no power but depended fully on the power of God **through their periodic heavenly journeys**. It simply cannot be doubted that Paul meant that the Galatians “formerly” were worshippers of these false gods and were “*now*” by “**divination**” “*busy painstakingly reintroducing*” **worship of these**. These “gods”, the “gods” of “days, months, seasons and years”, the Galatians “now again” – for no reason and for no excuse – “desired to be in bondage to all over again”.

“Those who interpret stoixeia as star-spirits see a connection between the stars and the time-divisions. The planets are presumed to regulate the calendar. As we see it, this relationship is quite unfounded. There is no evidence anywhere to show that Paul traces the origin and

character of the Jewish ceremonial law to the dominion of the planetary spirits.”

Of course Paul does not “*trace the origin and character of the Jewish ceremonial law to the dominion of the planetary spirits.*” It is a ridiculous presumption to think that anybody would think so. What is ridiculous though is to introduce “**Jewish ceremonial law**” into the issue. To “*interpret stoixeia*” taking into account the “*connection between the stars and the time-divisions*” is just keen and realistic observance. *There is no evidence anywhere to show that Paul traces the origin and character of the dominion of the planetary spirits to the Jewish ceremonial law! Ridderbos twists the facts!* The “principle” of the Galatians’ heresy “*presumed*” that “*the planets regulate the calendar*” as well as man’s fate and wellbeing – **even his salvation**. It is quite well and factually **founded right here in context** in Galatians and in contemporary history! Even the **country of Galatia** is associated with pagan observations of astral times and bodies on a par with other geographical regions like Egypt and Syria. “*This relationship*” between *stoixeia and the time-divisions* underlies Paul’s reason for his writing to the Galatians. It indicates his *intent, inasmuch as his argument is entirely directed against “gods by nature no-gods”, “cosmic rulers” and “bondage” of the spirit of man*. We quote; we do not surmise these things. “*This relationship*” is relevant and connected logically as well as contextually. *There is every evidence contextually to show that Paul traces the origin and “character of the dominion of the planetary spirits” to these things, “gods by nature no-gods”, “cosmic rulers” and “bondage”, manifested in the Galatians’ “observation” of “days, months, seasons and years”*. The fact that Paul describes these “observations” as of “days and months and seasons and years” show that they all were “observed” as the full cycles they are and for their full duration **as if in themselves immortal deistic entities**. Their “observations” exhibit a feature that has **neither parallel nor analogue** in “*Jewish ceremonial law*”, culture or religion as far as that law, culture and religion stood in the sign of the Covenant of Grace. But when it departed from its divine roots, even “*Jewish ceremonial law*”, culture and religion were perverted into idolatry. But that is not what we admit here in Galatians to be the case, for here it is not Jews who go back to Old Testament worship nor Jews who go back to pagan worship, but pagans converted to Christianity who return to their former state under pagan worship.

In the words of Paul, the “cosmic powers / rulers” are then “observed / divined” as the “*tyrants*” that bring mankind under “bondage” as long as mankind remains in **or returns to** an original state of ignorance of the true knowledge of God. (The true knowledge of God “*as it is in Christ*”.)

Stoixeia, plural, from *stoixos* singular, “That which has its position in a series or row, such as the letters of the alphabet, or figures in a column.” Ridderbos, p. 153, note 5. That which has **first** or **capitol** position in a series or row, gives the applied meaning of the **plural**. “Hence: the elementary ... principia”. The *stoixeia* are the “rulers” or “principles” (of the series or row or whatever). “The star-forces or powers ... according to the pagan mythological conception ... are then interpreted as the tyrants of mankind in the period of its minority before the coming of Christ”, Ridderbos concludes.

“Mankind in the period of its minority before the coming of Christ” is a good description for what Paul calls “the one born by a bondmaid”, those of the covenant by the initiative of Abraham, “the one which is Agar”, the “barren” and “desolate”. Her children are “many more than she which hath an husband”, Israel the Jewish nation. “Paul is representing Jewry, and its bondage to the law, as co-subject to these spiritual forces”. Exactly, but Paul confirms this logical consequential **fact not in 4:8 to 11, but only in verse 25**. He incidentally in verse 25 observes, “This **Agar** ... corresponds to **Jerusalem** which now is and is in bondage with her children” – **the unbelieving Jewish nation**. The two correspond; they are not identical. “**Together they are in bondage**”.

It cannot be denied that the **Jew**, like the Gentile **pagan** before the “*great event*” of coming to the knowledge of God “*as it is in Christ*” are all together and alike “*co-subject*”, “*under bondage*”. That is the case even today and concerns all men, all unbelievers, any not Christians, who have not yet come to that true knowledge of God “*as it is in Christ*”. But it cannot be denied that what the Jew of Old Testament times “*knew about God*” differed from what the heathen pagans knew about Him. The Jew “*knew about God*” the **true** God, and “*what they knew about God*” was that the Anointed of God would come as Saviour and in fact and in effect **already was** their eternal Saviour **through faith!** That was the object lesson of “*the whole system*” of the “*Jewish economy*”. **Nothing** the like can or may be said of the whole scheme of idolatrous worship that in the world surrounded this **true** knowledge and worship of God entrusted to the equally enslaved children of Israel.

Paul says, these “things”, “are an allegory” of “two **covenants**”, 4:24. He doesn’t talk about the Eternal Covenant of Grace or its constituent parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. **Both “covenants” Paul here supposes are covenanted by man. Both “covenants” refer to the works and merit of man generally.** “The one from the mount Sinai” – **long before Moses** – being the works of **Abraham**, “is **Agar**” from whom “gendered” (*ghennohsa*) the Gentiles. This “covenant”, “**corresponds**” or “is similar to” (*suntoichei*) “Jerusalem which now is (*i.e.*, the children of **Sarah**), for it serves in

bondage **just like** (*meta*) her (Agar’s) children”. Paul does **not** speak of the Old - and the New Testament-covenants. He compares two **man-made** “covenants”, **both** Abraham’s, and both “gendering unto bondage”. But **covenanted by God**, “**Jerusalem above**, is **free**, the mother of **us all**”. This “Covenant”, this “country”, was “seen afar off” by faith even by Abraham himself. “Jerusalem” – which in the days of Abraham or Moses was not yet existing – by “divine agreement”, **by oath of God’s fidelity to his eternal purpose of salvation, would become “mother of us all”, that is, mother of all believers in Jesus Christ.**

Paul compares “**the Law**” with “guardians”, taskmasters, and “stewards” “schoolmasters”, “**to bring us unto Christ**”. The Law brings us to the “Covenant” called “Jerusalem above” which will harbour all men “gendered” in bondage from either of Abraham’s “covenants” **but “redeemed”** by the “sending of God’s Son” and “the Spirit of his Son”. Eventually Paul’s whole argument opens up into the freedom whereby exactly those born of **any** “bondwoman” (whether of Agar or Sarah) are become sons and heirs being born by “the Spirit of his Son”, 4:6! “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are **children of promise**”, 28, even though and despite the fact that **we all** were born of **Abraham’s infidelity and faithlessness**.

Paul does not equalise the Law with paganism. He equalises all men before the judgement seat of the Holy One of Israel. He **identifies the state of all men** under the bondage of the “*lack of the knowledge*” of God “*as it is in Christ*”.

Paul **by the nature and principle of his argument, does “represent Jewry, and its bondage to the law, as co-subject to these spiritual forces”** which the **Gentiles** were in bondage to. “The one” man is born of Agar, the other of Sarah, **but both are the offspring of Abraham**. Paul **factually does not “represent Jewry, and its bondage to the law, as co-subject to these spiritual forces”** which the **Gentiles** were in bondage to. (He calls Abraham the father of them that believe whether they were born from Agar or from Sarah!) He speaks of those **without any true** knowledge of God – who could not be the Jews under the “dispensation of the Law” because that was a dispensation of true divine revelation.

In verse 4:3, says Ridderbos, “*The apostle speaks of Jews and Gentiles in a comprehensive sense, this time not as both being subject to the law but (both being subject) to the rudiments (or elements) of the world. ... The passage has reference to definite principles or axioms (cf. Heb.5:12), according to which men lived before Christ, without finding redemption in them.*” A little further on Ridderbos writes, “*Since the apostle speaks of being held in bondage under these rudiments, we shall probably have to think of the prescriptions and ordinances to which*

*religious man outside Christ surrendered himself, and by means of which he tried to achieve redemption. Before the coming of Christ the whole world was slavishly subjected to these rudiments or elements, **also those who by means of the works of the Law tried to earn their justification before God. For even, though the Law was of divine origin, the use that man made of it was wrong. Those who lived under the law in this unwarranted way lived in the same condition of bondage as that under which the Gentiles, for all their exertion, also pined***".

The situation as Ridderbos here describes exactly was the Galatians' situation. They broke the Law and every principle and commandment of it in desiring to worship idols and to venerate pagan practice. **Then** they picked and chose of the Law what might suit their purpose. They chose to circumcise **to insure themselves** against damnation **for rejecting Christ**. Their decision was the abnegation of faith and obedience.

In Galatians 4 Paul explains his **presupposition stated in 3:28-29** of **how** heathen pagans can become children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And **if ye be Christ's, then** are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise". **One becomes Christ's first, by election of sovereign grace, before one becomes Abraham's child.** The **crux** of the matter is, **you must be found in Christ Jesus** in order to be a saved person. The **question** is: **How do I become "in Christ"?**

'This is the Gospel in a nutshell, and I Paul shall now explain it to you, o Galatians. I shall explain it to you by analogy of the Jewish race. Now if it had been possible for us the Jews to be found in Christ, then how not you Gentiles also? Because no man ever could find himself in bondage to principles that bar him from salvation more than us Jews found ourselves in. We, just like you Gentiles, were servants to "the important things of the world". But we Jews had been under the Law also – revealed to us by God himself! We could never be excused for sin, the Law made sure of that. Where would we find refuge then but in the Good News of Free Grace as God revealed it through the sending of his Son? If this had been the case with us Jews, tell me, who did hinder you Gentiles, that you should not obey the truth?'

Paul from verse 1 to verse 7 tells what the grace of God had done **for the Jews**, 'Now I say, That (we Jews, God's) heirs, as long as we were babies, **differed nothing** from (our Gentile) servants, **although** we were the owners of all God's promises. But we were kept under strict rule under protection of tutors and guardians (the Law) till the time our Father decided upon. Although we were the heirs, when we were immature lived by "**rule of worldly things**". We lived by the 'stoixeia' -

*just like you erstwhile Gentiles. We who were born under God's Law were estranged from God and **loved the world and its godless ways**. We, Jews, **knew** the only true God and Father but served Him not like sons would. We were **enslaved to the world's most important things**. We forsook God despite the fact that He entrusted his holy Law to us, despite the fact that we were a people through His faithfulness and by his will to choose Sarah. You Gentiles though are a people by the faithlessness of Abraham and his own will and way with Agar.*

*But God appointed the time and fulfilled it in **sending forth his Son** his rightful heir. He is the brother of us all, the One Seed of Abraham, in Whom we all – we Jews as well as you Gentiles - receive our inheritance according to every promise from the mouth of our Father. That is how God kept Word with us all! He proved Himself the faithful God of that covenant **He** by word of oath made with us who were then still in the loins of our father Abraham. He sent his Son, made of a woman. Born under the law. He really became a human being, indeed a Jew! He received no privileges. The Law sought Him out especially. Where we children invariably proved ourselves disobedient, God in Him always found great pleasure. Even the guardians and tutors retired. The Law was so satisfied it took its leave. Even the righteousness of the Law was as without glory against the Son's brightness. You could imagine how some of us, yea, all of us got jealous of our Brother, how we scorned Him, beat Him, despised Him. We at last killed Him for his righteousness and spotless character and conduct. Only afterwards did we realise: it was the sending of God our Father of his Son. **God so loved the world He sent his Son to redeem** them, even us, us the Jews so responsible for having received the Law and therefore so much heavier laden under sin, that we might receive the adoption of sons – that we might be real sons and heirs. Hear, it is God speaking, '**And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, calling Father, Father!** For this reason you no longer are a servant or stranger, but a son. And if you are son, then heir of God through Christ your Brother, whose Spirit you have now received into your hearts.'*

By both Incarnation and Spirit God respected his eternal Covenant of Grace with the Jews the ones He had every reason to reject and disinherit. **Sons after the flesh therefore are not real sons.** Only when born of the Spirit do "babies" become "sons" of God and "heirs" of the Promise – as for the Jews, so for the Gentiles. It shows how great the mercy, how totally of grace God makes us his own. It shows **God saves us not because we are Jews but in spite of the fact that we are Jews.** And whatever Paul might have said in passing about the Law, not only leaves the Law intact, but leaves it honoured more than erstwhile when it had not been proved through Christ so divine yet.

This passage of verses 4:1 to 7 is interpreted **as to apply to the Gentiles as well**. By this passage Paul proves **the possibility of the impossible**. Despite the attempt to make this passage apply to both Jews and Gentile, this truth cannot be avoided: If Jews could be saved, there is no reason why the Gentiles could not.

“The Scriptures (the Law) concluded all mankind (Jews and Gentiles) under sin ... Before faith came we (all) were kept under the law, shut up (in bondage) until the faith which should afterwards be revealed ... Now I say that the heir (the Jews) for as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant (you the Gentiles) though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed by his father. Even so we (all, Jews and Gentiles), when we (alike) were children were (all) in bondage under the elements (“principles” or “rulers”) of the world. (All, Jews like Gentiles, were “in bondage”, as “under the law”, so “under the principles of the world”.) But, when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman (like us all), made under the law (though, like not all of us, but like the Jews rather than like the Gentiles). God sent forth his Son to redeem them (not us all, but them) that were under the law (that is, the Jews) that we (all, Jews and Gentiles) may receive the adoption of sons (not by the Law but because God sent forth his Son). And because you (Greeks, Gentiles) are sons (as well not by the Law but because God sent forth his Son) God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts (also, as He sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts) calling, o Father our Father! Therefore (because God is Father of us all) you (o Galatians) are no more servant, but son! And if son, then you (o Gentile Galatians) are heir (like “us” the Jews). You are heir of God (the true God) through Christ (only and alone)!”

Whichever way one decides to interpret this passage, it, while being the explanation of how **any man** may become “in Christ”, nevertheless **retains sharp contrast with verses 8 to 11:**

“But then in fact (*alla tote men*), you (former heathen pagans) in utter ignorance of God (*ouk eidontes Theon*) (“at the first – verse 13) slavishly served things that by nature are no gods (*edouleusate tois fusei meh ousin theois*). **But now** (*nun de*) that you do know God, yea rather, now that you are being known by God – **HOW COULD** you (*pohs*) **again** turn **back** (*epi plus strephete*), **again back** to (*palin plus epi ...*) the weak and beggarly rulers (*ta astheneh kai ptocha stoicheia*), which **again** and **anew** (*palin anoththen*) you cherish to serve (*douleusai thelete*)? Days you **again** serve by divination (*hehemeras paratehresthe kai*), months you **again** serve by divination (*mehnas paratehresthe kai*), seasons you **again** serve by divination (*kairous paratehresthe kai*), (and) years you (of course “again”, “serve by divination - eniautous *paratehresthe*). I fear I (initially, “at first” and till “now”) bestowed

labour on you in vain!” The verb “you serve by divination” – *paratehresthe*, is each time repeated by implication – ellipsis – as well as by force of the connective *kai*. The idea of the repetition of a former condition is distinguishable also in verses 15 to 17 and 5:1. The idea of repetition though is **strikingly wanting** in verses **21** and **31** where Paul refers to the **law**. They who “formerly” were under bondage of **idolatry**, “now” – **for the first time** – **also** “desire to be under (the bondage of) the law”.

If it is possible that God could redeem Jews, then how could He not redeem Gentiles? Now if more probable that God may redeem Gentiles rather than Jews, **how impossible that Gentiles could return to their former gods?**

By way of all the “again’s” and “and’s”, Paul leaves no doubt that the Galatians were returning to their **original state in pagan heathendom** and that that was what he could not understand of their conduct.

8.3.3.2.

A Certain Word Required

The relation between “things no gods” and “weak and beggarly rulers”, and the divination of **cosmic cyclic times**, is **direct and absolute**. *“After all this grace bestowed on you by God, after all this might and power of Him to save, after all this labour bestowed on you by me, and you again turn to your first lovers those lustrous powers who appear like gods but really are cruel tyrants ... Well. God may not, but I give up if this be true.”*

You “observe”, says Paul, “days, months, seasons and years” - the four “elements” of “**time**” – *kairos*. *Kairos* in Greek thinking means “**opportunistly**”, “**vital**”. For the Galatians their “observation” was vital, and had every thing to do with **fate**.

The **contextual thrust** of Paul’s argument demands a word that will transfer the idea of **pagan worship** of,

1, “those things in / by nature being no gods” – *tois physei meh ousin theois*, but that by nature are the creation of man’s imagination.

It demands a word that will transfer the idea of **veneration** of, **2, “cosmic powers”** – *stoixeia tou kosmou*. *“The star-forces or powers ... according to the pagan mythological conception ... interpreted as the tyrants of mankind”*. The **act of worship** Paul supposes was not that of the “observance” of “Mosaic” or “Jewish” “Law”, but the **veneration of the major primitive cosmic cyclic periods**.

The **contextual thrust** of Paul’s argument demands a word that will transfer the idea of,

3, “enslavement-worship” – *edouleusate / douleusai*, by,

4, “wilful” human headstrongness – *thelete*, to,

5, “return” – *epistrophe*, **“again”** – *palin*, and “anew” / **“all over again”** – *anohthen*, to a **former idolatry**.

The **contextual thrust** of Paul’s argument demands a word that will transfer the idea of pagan worship such as,

6, would find **analogy in Scriptures**. Paul refers to Scripture to show by “an allegory” that all men are born and are by nature found “in bondage” and are freed only by virtue of “Jerusalem above”. So all men’s worship and religion are idolatry “before faith came”.

An analogy of the Galatians’ worship and religion is found under Manasses’ kingship, 4 Kings 21 (LXX). Manasses means “The **Forgetful one**”. He forgot the God of his fathers and “did that which was ... **according to the abominations of the nations**” = “principles of the world”. “He built **high places** (for the “observation” of “cosmic elements”, “days, months, seasons and years”). “He built again which Ezekias his father had demolished”, just like the Galatians “returned again” to “worship” (*douleuoh*) and to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage” – **that which the Gospel had demolished**. “Manasses set up an altar to Baal (the sun-god) ... and worshipped (*prosekunehse*) all the hosts / powers of heaven (*pasehi tehi dunamei tou ouranou*) and served (*edouleusen*) them. (To “worship” and to “serve” are synonymous.) He built an altar in the house of the Lord whereas he had said, In Jerusalem I will place my name. And he caused his sons to pass through the fire. And used divination (*eklehdonidzeto* – *to klehdonisma*, “*a sign or omen*”) and auspices (*oiohnidzeto* – “*to take omens, to forbode*”). And made groves (*alseh / temeneh*. *To temenos* – “*a piece of land sacred to a god*”, “*the precincts of a temple*”: hence, *temeneh* from the worship offered to the “cosmic rulers” – *stoicheia tou kosmou* – Galatians, or, “*the heavenly hosts*” - *dunami tou ouranou* – 4 Kings. *Alseh* - “*especially sacred groves*” (Classic Greek Dictionary) were grown specifically for the purpose of “*observations*” of heavenly bodies and to “*work out days, months, seasons and years*”. (Even the Incas designed their temples and shrines around groves for this very purpose.) ... And “read the fullness of time” (*gnohstas eplehthuneh*) so as to do that which was evil, **in the face of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger**. Manasses ... did all these evils and abominations” (literally “stinking” presaging – *to bdelugma*, from the entrails of animals). Most conspicuous was his provocation of the Lord, to taunt Him in his face: **“The name of Manasses in the house of the Lord!”** Just so the Galatians: They abused the Name of the Lord through the holy institution of circumcision to give an appearance of godliness to their idolatrous “religion”. Theirs was not a religion of “syncretistic Judaism”, but of perverted, **idolatrous Christianity**. (Notice the wizardry practised by Constantine “The Great” and the Roman Catholic Church who even today practice astrology and angel- and saints-worship –

acknowledged “theological” disciplines in that “church”.)

Finally the **contextual thrust** of Paul’s argument demands a word that will transfer the idea of

7, the **“observation”** or scrutinising, obsessive devotion to “cyclic rule”.

All the components of an idolatrous religion **as would require the use of such a word** as we are searching for would at the time of Paul’s writing have made up universal heathen worship. (To compare, Zen Buddhism of modern Japan disposes of every ingredient of just such a religion. As today such a religion in Paul’s day was real and practical and assertive despite its semblance of being enquiring and meditative. But such idolatry is as real today in the Christian Roman Catholic Church especially in Portugal, Spain, Italy and Latin America as it never was in Paul’s day. Paul preached the Gospel to counter such a religion of doctrine and worship.)

For contextual, topical and practical reasons, the meaning of the word usually translated **“observe”** in Galatians 4:10 should rather be rendered **“observations”** and for **contextual, topical and practical reasons** the **times** mentioned there, should be understood for **time-cycles** of heathen and superstitious and idolatrous “divinations” / “observations”.

Words and Phrases One Could Expect (?) Paul Would Have Used

Traditionally claimed the texts Colossians 2:16 and Romans 14:5-6 are “parallels” of Galatians 4:9-10. The most popular word used to describe what the Christians did whenever they “Judaised”, is “observe”. (In **Colossians 2:16** the NAB even says, “*Let nobody prescribe to you to celebrate the Sabbath*”). In the meantime the Greek – the original – says, “Let no one judge you in meat or in drink regarding feasts, new moons or sabbath days”. **Paul uses no verb**, no predicate whatsoever to indicate that the Colossians “observed” feast days. He **supposes** their “celebration”, but he supposes **it their act of “eating” and “drinking”**, “with regard to” these occasions. There is nothing “parallel” between Galatians 4:10 and Colossians 2:16.

In **Romans 14:5** Paul says, “One person regards a day above the others; another person regards every day equally important”. Here Paul supposes the “observance” or “celebration” of “Jewish” feast days. He uses the words, *krinoh* and *phraneoh*. He doesn’t use these words in Galatians 4:10 though. He doesn’t blame the Galatians for “observing” “days, months, seasons, years”. For good reason!

Paul would have had every reason to simply use the word *tehreoh* (“**Keep** the commandments”, Mt. 19:17 et al.) in Galatians 4:10, had he

meant, ‘*You observe days and months and seasons and years as the Jews observe their feasts, new moons and Sabbaths*’. But no! And so one could go on to point out words **just right** for Paul’s purpose, **were** they to mean to “observe”, “obey”, “celebrate”, “hallow” etc.

8.3.3.3.

“**By Divination to Worship**”

In fact Paul uses a very peculiar word in Galatians,

paratehreoh. (The middle voice, *paratehreomai*, has the active meaning, Blass Debrunner 2, 16, 1.)

The Classic Greek Dictionary, Ricker Berry, University of Chicago, Follett, 1962, *Paratehreoh*. “To watch closely or narrowly: to observe superstitiously”.

“The preposition (para) denotes the presence of the observer on the one side and the energy of participation on the other” (Kittel).

Paratehreoh does not denote objective observation, but rather involved subjectivity and subjection.

W.K. Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke* 1882, 153, referring to *paratehreoh*, explains in terms of medical “observation” or “diagnostics”.

Aristotle of Stageiros (384-322 BC) *Historia Animalium*, IX 34, p, 620a, 8, *Paraterohn anaduomenon ek tehs thalassehs* – “(the white-tailed eagle) while rising from the sea **keeping (it) in sight** (chases a bird)”.

Polybius of Megalopolis (210-120 BC), Book 18, 3.2, “Lie in wait / **ensnare and bewitch** / keep in prison / **tightly watched**”.

Cebes, *Tabula* 9, 2 (First Century AD), *Paratehrousin tous eilehphotos ti para tehs tuchehs* – “They **lurk upon** them whomever **according to fate** taking”. Notice the use of *paratehreoh* in connection with *heh tuchehe*. The *Tuchehe Sohteira* – “**goddess of fortune**”.

Dionysius of Hallucarnassus (about 30 BC), *On Old Sayings* – *Peri Tohn Archaiohn Rehtorohn*, II, 53, *tous anaghinohskontas chreh paratehreoin* – “those who recognise signs of fate”. Notice the use of *paratehreoh* with *chreh* – *to chrehn*, “**sign of fate**”.

Clemens Alexandrinus (150-215 AD), *Stromata* I, 73, 6, *paratehrei moi tous chronous eis sunkrisin tehs Mohuseohs hehlikias* – “it **strikes** me these times in the **coming together** of the Mosaic **dispensations**”. Notice the context in which *paratehreoh* is used, “the **coming together of dispensations**”.

Stromata VI, 66, 5, *hoper kai epi tohn prophehteuein nun deh leghomenohn paratehrehteon* – “whoever indeed on prophecy speaks should now be speaking divination”. Notice the almost synonymous meaning of *paratehreoh* and “**prophecy**”.

Dio Cassius of Nicea (155-235 AD), Book 38, 13, 6, *ta ek tou ouranou ghignomena paratehreoin* – “to be on the look-out for **omens** coming from the **heavens**”.

Vettius Valens, Greek **astrologer** of the second century, Book 4 (Krol Ed.), 29 (205, 13), uses the word for his “science”.

“(The Indian gymnosophists) resolve to **divine / foretell** (*dokousi de paratehreoin*) the **heavens** (*ta ourania*) and through these **signs** of the **nearing** things (*kai dia tehs toutohn sehmeiohseohs tohn mellontohn*) to **ensure** some(thing) (*promanteuesthai tina*). (Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata*, III, 60, 4.)

Oxyrhynchus Papyri (edited Grenfell and Hunt), *paratehreisthai tehn phialehn* - “**to read / interpret the disc of a heavenly body**”. The *Areos phialeh* – **Mars War-god-protector** (shield). Cf. the *tuchehe sohteira* – “goddess of fortune”. Also cf. *sohtehe phulaks* – “tutelary god” or “sentinel” (Classic Dictionary).

In the Septuagint, *paratehreoh* in Ps.36:12 / 37:12; 129:3 / 130:3, means “to mark (iniquities)”; in 1Sm.1:12, Ps.55:7 / 56:6, it means “to pay heed to”. It **never** means to “observe” in the sense of “to keep / celebrate (commandments)”.

Josephus (32-97 AD) uses *paratehreoh* with the meaning of “to find by observation (*Bellum Judaicum* 2, 468), “to wait for” (“Test. Sol. 6:4” ... ?)

Says Josephus in *Apology* 2, 282, *hai nehsteia kai luchnohn anakauseis kai polla tohn eis brohsin humihn ou nenonismenon paratehrehantai* – “fasts and kindling lights and more things to do with food that concern us (Jews) **not recognised in divinations**. Notice the use of *paratehreomai* in conjunction with *nenonismenon* : Perfect Passive *nenonismai* from *nomidzoh* : *ta nenonismena tou nomidzein theous* – “**to recognise the gods acknowledged by the state**”! (Classic Dictionary) That implies, “things to do with food that concern us (Jews) **not recognised in divinations**” ... **of the gods!**

Pseudoclementine Homilies, 19, 22, 2-9, “a passage which, probably in direct controversy with Paul (in Galatians 4:10), deals thoroughly with the significance of observing specific times in the begetting of children. In the context one finds the following terms. *aparatehrehthohs* (inexpedient), *akairohs* (undue), *kairos* (convenient), *epitehdeios* (studied, designedly) *epitehrehsimoi hehmerai* (days in waiting), *amelehstantes tehn paratehrehsin* (signs un-delayed).” (Kittel 148)

In the New Testament the word *paratehreoh* / *paratehreomai* appears in Mk.3:2, Lk.6:7, 14:1, 20:20, and in Acts 9:24. Read these texts from the Scriptures. **Notice the Law is not once the thing “observed”.**

According to Kittel, “The term also means ‘to keep’ with reference to cultic observance”. And he quotes **one text, Galatians 4:10**, to illustrate what he means. Now that would have been a fine remark. In Galatians 4:10 the meaning for sure is “‘to keep’ with reference to cultic observance”. But what is **not** the meaning in this Scripture-passage, is that “Paul says that relapse into **Jewish** observance is like a relapse into polytheism (that) means a loss of freedom”. (Emphasis CGE) “**Jewish** observance”? Why “Jewish”? We need not repeat everything we have so far elaborated on but that Paul does not say, suggest, imply or insinuate “**Jewish** observance” in Galatians 4:10, but heathen, pagan, idolatrous “observation”, NOT of “**Jewish**” “feasts, new moons and Sabbath Days”, but of the “cosmic”, “elemental” time-cycles, “days, months, seasons, years”.

But just look at this: “The word ‘observe’ in Gal. 4:10 is important. The original word appears only six times in the New Testament, namely in Mark 3:2, Luke 6:7, 14:1, 20:20, Acts 9:24 and the text we here concern ourselves with, Gal. 4:10. Except in Acts 9:24 where it literally means ‘to guard (a gate)’, it is every time used to indicate how the Pharisees tried to protect the Sabbath, how they ‘kept’ Jesus ‘in the eye if He would heal any one on the Sabbath’. From this it is obvious that the original was a special word to indicate the Pharisees’ protection of the Sabbath. And Paul was a Pharisee (Phil.3:5) who knew their terms. If then he uses specifically **this** word, ‘observe’ in Gal. 4:10, it supplies even greater evidence that he spoke of the Jewish Sabbath.” Prof. Adrio König, *Sondag*, p. 19a. (Emphasis CGE)

“It is every time used to indicate how the Pharisees tried to protect the Sabbath ... a special word to indicate the Pharisees’ protection of the Sabbath”. **Professor Doctor** Adrio König, unbelievable!

“The compound (para plus tehreoh) ... seems to have the sense of ‘anxious, scrupulous, well-informed observance in one’s own interest’ which does not fit the traditional celebration of the Sabbath or other Jewish feasts but does fit regard for points or spans of time which are evaluated positively or negatively from the standpoint of the calendar or astrology.” (Kittel)

This commentator contradicts Prof. König’s meaning. But then he continues, “Naturally it is conceivable that **Jewish feasts**, especially in the Hellenistic sphere, were regarded and celebrated superstitiously”. (Emphasis CGE) From where, again, does this scholar get the idea that Paul has “**Jewish feasts**” in mind? The one interpreter after the other only echoes others. But M.J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul, Epistle aux Galates*, “on 4:10 points out that the very neutral terms days, months, times and years (as distinct from the formulation in Col.2:i6) are chosen so as to cover Hellenistic superstition in general.” The concept of “**Jewish feasts**” is

irrelevant and unnecessary. Whether or not superstitiously celebrated, “**Jewish feasts**” are not Paul’s concern, but rather “**points or spans of time which are evaluated positively or negatively from the standpoint of the calendar or astrology**”. “Evaluated positively or negatively from the standpoint of the calendar or astrology” is what the word *paratehrehoh* / *paratehrehomai* means, seen in the light of these many incidences of its use as well as in the specific context of this Scripture, Galatians 4:10.

To complete the picture of the word *paratehrehoh*’s meaning, reference must be made to another form of this word as used in the Scriptures. That form is the **noun** *paratehrehosis* derived from the **verb** we have considered up to now.

“It means ‘observing’ by scientists or physicians”, e.g. Sextus Empiricus, physician in Alexandria (c. 200 AD), *Adversus Mathematicos*, I, 153.

Diodorus Siculus of Agrigento in Sicily (time of Augustus 63 BC – 14 AD), *History of the World*, I, 9, 6; I, 28, 1, 5, 31, 3, “*In Egyptian or Babylonian astronomy*”, *hai tohn astrohn arxaiototai paratehrehseis* – “the search for the beginning of the stars”. *History of the World*, 5, 31, 3, *palaiahi tini kai polychroniohi paratehrehsei peri toutohn pepisteukutes* – “overseeing / scrutinising (human sacrifices)”.

Flavius Clemens Alexandrinus of Athens (150-215 AD), *Stromata* I, 135,2, *ta pleista ek paratehrehseohs kai eks eikotohn proeirehkotes* – “things commonplace foretold from observations and from probabilities”. *Stromata* VI, 32, 1, *ek tehs tohn metarsiohn paratehrehseohs polla proleghohn* – “from the highly speculative many things being forecast”.

Claudius Galenus of Pergamon (129-199 AD), renowned physician of imperial Rome, *Hippocratis Prognosticum*, III, 15, 257, *ek paratehrehseohs didachthehnai* – “to learn from inspection / observation”.

“In the LXX there are no instances of *paratehrehosis*, but it occurs in ‘A at Ex.12:42 in *nuks paratehrehseohs ... LXX: nuktos prophulakeh ... ekeineh heh nuks hauteh prophulakeh kuriohi*.” “It is a night to be strictly fixed / worked out precisely / anticipated fervently”.

“In the New Testament *paratehrehosis* occurs only once at Lk.17:20. The interpretation of the verse is important here in fixing the sense of *paratehrehosis*.” “When He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The Kingdom of God comes not with signs (*meta paratehrehseohs*). Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!, for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.”

“One must ask whether *paratehrehosis* is related directly to the temporal **pote** of the preceding question of the Pharisees whereas **idou**

ohde eh ekei in distinction herefrom has a local sense, whether the reference is thus to the calculating of times on the one hand and the local establishment of visible signs on the other. It may be said in this regard that the temporal and the local aspects are very close in all apocalyptic. For this reason it is as well to regard the two negative statements of the logion as virtually synonymous. (It should be noted that the meaning "observation" is naturally suggested for paratehrehsis by the texts adduced above and also by the astronomical contents. In these texts paratehrehsis never means the calculation of future phenomena but the concrete observations which underlie such calculations) [as stoicheia underlie the concepts of time] Another problem is whether to take the saying as future so that the calculation or observation of the signs of apocalyptic events stands in contrast to the sudden (future) incursion of the Kingdom of God. Or is the reference to the Kingdom of God already come? The latter view is to be preferred, and so is the interpretation "among you", "in your midst", or even "in your sphere", for entos humohn. Does this mean that in the two parts of the logion the calculable futurity of eschatological events according to Jewish expectations is contrasted with the presence already of God's rule in the coming of Jesus? Behind this kind of exposition is the improbable assumption that paratehrehsis means the calculation of future events with the help of signs. But the examples from profane literature show that the sense which fits best is that of the rational-empirical observation and fixing of signs and symptoms."

Why is "the calculation of future events with the help of signs" an "improbable assumption"? **Is not** "the calculation of future events with the help of signs", also "virtually synonymous" with what "the examples from profane literature show", that "the sense which fits best is that of the rational-empirical observation and fixing of signs and symptoms"? **Is not** "the calculation of future phenomena" also "virtually synonymous" with "the concrete observations which underlie such calculations"? **It should be remembered** "the temporal and the local aspects are very close in all apocalyptic".

"Lk.17:20 further thus means that whether the Kingdom of God has already come cannot be decided on the basis of events which intimate and anticipate the final consummation as though the desire for rationally and empirically accessible signs and proofs could be satisfied therewith. In the measure that the divine dominion is already at work it can be known and grasped only by faith. The saying is one of the Synoptic statements concerning the mystery of the Kingdom of God, which is not accessible to the Pharisaic demand for signs. The expression ouk erchetai heh basileia tou theou meta paratehrehseohs shows that the attitude of the Pharisees expressed in their Messianic and eschatological expectations is quite

inadequate in face of what is effected by the coming of Jesus in the midst of His people."

8.3.3.4.

"Divination" of Another Sort

It is clear that *paratehrehoh* / -*omai* / *paratehrehsis* indicates "observation" in the sense of "divination", because that was exactly how the Pharisees expected the Kingdom of God to come and exactly what Jesus said they were mistaken in. Had one to retranslate the word into the language Jesus spoke, it certainly would have been with a word that had the meaning of "divination". And this is the sense in which *paratehrehoh* perfectly fits Paul's purpose in Galatians 4:10. Paul did not have the "keeping" of the different Jewish "Sabbaths" in mind, but the superstitious "divination" of those very pagan "gods" or "principles" (*stoicheia*) of time, namely "days, months, seasons (times) and years". The Galatians "returned again" to their "former" **idolatry**, and not to Judaism, and then **topped their error** with abuse of the pure and Biblical institution of circumcision.

"*In the mysterious cosmic speculations of the Fathers*", says Samuele Bacchiocchi, quoting Jean Daniélou, "the incorporation into the Christian mystery of a whole solar mythology (is found) *The conflict of light with darkness* (the motive Justin uses for the creation of light on the First Day) is expressed by the myth of Ormuzd and Ahriman, of Apollo and Poseidon. But Christ is the sun of the new creation: His name is *Orient, the Dawn of the East, He attacked the power of darkness, and, on the day of His Resurrection, He completely scattered the darkness of death and of sin. So Christianity disengages the cosmic symbols from the pagan myths ... and incorporates them as figures of the mysteries of truth. This line of thought shows*", says Daniélou, "*that we are in the fourth century, at the time of the decline of paganism, when Christianity began to cloth itself in its garments.*"

Justin Martyr uses amulets of word of the light-god who put up a fight against the darkness-god and prevailed on the First Day of creation. Says he, Christians keep the Sun's Day. "*There are many other ways*" and "*other Christs*". Jesus becomes Jupiter and his cross the Tau; God the Father, Bacchus. And Anti-Christ worships idols and images and calls them by the Name of Jesus Christ! It happens when the Christ of Christian Worship is de-historicised and diluted into the vapour of man's own "faith".

Daniélou (as Bacchiocchi) is concerned with the Easter problem and therefore applies these facts of history to the fourth century. But these lines and the facts therein mentioned perfectly apply to the first century and the situation in the earliest missionary Congregations of Galatia. This Roman province historically and even geographically lent itself to

paganism and today still carries topographic names of the gods and battles of the gods. The gods not only created its history but also its landscape. From this part of the world came the greatest challenge to the purity and innocence of the young and tender faith of Christianity. Daniélou could just as well have said, *This line of thought shows that we are in the **first** century, at a time of the **ascending** of paganism, when Christianity began to cloth itself in its garments.* And if Bacchiocchi's phrase, "*the mysterious cosmic speculations of the Fathers*" would be translated into Greek, the word used for "*speculation*" certainly would have been *paratehrehoh*.

When Professor Doctor Adrio König wants to know, "*What does Paul want to say about the Sabbath in Galatians 4:10*", the answer is, **Nothing!** The Sabbath has no bearing on the subject and the subject has no bearing on the Sabbath. When Professor Doctor Adrio König and with him the whole world allege that Paul wants to say "*very serious things*" about the **Sabbath**, he and the world are seriously, sanctimoniously mistaken. Paul, according to this false piety, wants to teach "*emphatically that those who still observe the Old Testament Sabbath, return to the weak and beggarly principles*". "*But even more serious*", according to these judges, "*Paul fears that such persons might not be Christians*"! Says König, to keep the Sabbath "*is as serious as to have yourself circumcised for religious motives*". Even had the Sabbath because it is an Old Testament institution been abrogated, it, like circumcision, remains an institution of God, and holy and sinless. It should not be derogated for being abrogated (were it so) **or for being abused**. But the Lord of the Sabbath shall avenge his Lordship of that Day as He jealously did in Old Testament times. He the more surely shall avenge his "Holy", the Sabbath Day, for the very reason of the present enlightenment and heavenly gift and partaking of the Holy Spirit and taste of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. And this is exactly what God in Galatians 4:10 to 11 by the mouth of Paul does in respect of **circumcision!** God avenges his Law of Circumcision in that Paul judges on His behalf, saying, That if you circumcise yourselves, o Galatians, after you have forsaken God and the true worship of God through Jesus Christ **in the way you have done**, then, I am afraid, I must judge that you are cut off from Christ!

We are forced to listen to what the Professor Doctor further has decided on those who keep the Sabbath, "*Then you are cut off from Christ, then you have fallen from grace. Here we have in principle the same danger against which the Apostle warns in Colossians two: to hold fast to the shadow and consequently to deny the body, Christ.*" As if he could read hearts, the Professor acts the judge while he is not even able to observe that the Body is the Church and Christ its Head. He cannot

discern that **the Sabbath which the Head of the Church is Lord of**, "holds good for the People of God" like a shadow holds fast to the Body that casts it. Where the Church be, it shall bring its shadow along with it and shall shelter the weary pilgrim like the tree under which God met with Abraham even while He overshadowed him with the grace of His Eternal Covenant.

Prof. König tries to explain the difference in Paul's attitude in Romans and in Galatians, "*In (Gal. 4 and Col. 2 Paul) strongly expresses himself against the observance of the Sabbath, but in Rom. 14 he allows it. This difference in his attitude may be explained therein that the false teachers in Galatia and Colossus put the keeping of the Law against Christ as though salvation is contained in the keeping of the Law rather than in the faith in Christ, while the Sabbath in Rome was more a case of practical nature not bound up with salvation. Then one is able to comprehend that Paul in Galatians and in Colossians rejects the Sabbath with all his might, but in Romans notwithstanding wants to see certain Christians who were only recently converted from the Jews and who still thought it is a sin to break the Sabbath be allowed for some time still to celebrate the Sabbath the Jewish way.*"

Paul "*in Gal. 4 and Col. 2*" **in no way** "*expresses himself against the observance of the Sabbath.*" "*In Rom. 14 he allows observance of the Sabbath*" **only by implication**. Paul in Romans 14 as unambiguously "*expresses himself against*" making of food and drink the Kingdom of God as he "*expresses himself against*" one Christian acting judge of another. "*In Rome*", food and drink, and the regard or non-regard for Jewish feast "days", were "*more*" than merely "*a case of practical nature*". These Christians' scruples were as "*bound up with salvation*" as could be. Paul "*rejected*" **the principle of it** "*with all his might*".

In **Colossians** the issue was not the "*the keeping of the Law against Christ as though salvation is contained in the keeping of the Law rather than in the faith in Christ*". In Colossians Paul endorses and defends the believers' freedom of feasting despite it being Old Testament feasting – just like in the case of Romans 14. In **Galatians** though, "*the keeping of the Law (was put) against Christ as though salvation is contained in the keeping of the Law rather than in the faith in Christ*" – which is perfectly true, but must be understood from the perspective that "*faith in Christ*" is here sacrificed not in favour of the Law, but in favour of heathendom. And that the Law is here abused to bless and sanctify the cursed and unholy practice of idolatry. (The same method is used today still by the Christian keeping of the heathen Sunday, where the Fourth Commandment is abused to give sanctity and acceptability to Christians' idolatrous disregard and contempt for Law and Lord.) "**Now I say**", **writes Paul, and he proceeds with treating on the backsliding of**

(converted) **pagan heathen** to their former and original state without knowledge of God and without having been known by God. *Certain Christians who were only recently converted from the **Gentiles**, thought it no sin having themselves **circumcised** – “the Jewish way”, and, they, **thought** it no sin having themselves circumcised as **guarantee and seal** in the salvation that is of **Christ**. Theirs was a perverse concoction of asceticism, hedonism, Judaism and Hellenistic cosmic worship. They wanted the best of all worlds, and in the process forfeited the only true salvation and happiness.*

“It remains difficult though” continues König (meaning “impossible”), “to understand how Paul could be so tolerant about a practice which is so irrefragable past for the Christian. In fact, he who still celebrates the Seventh Day, did not realise who and what Jesus Christ is (Col.2:16-17). It at least therefor is a very serious fault in understanding Jesus Christ if we still want to celebrate the Sabbath, that is, the Seventh Day – and it cannot simply be pardoned.”

*It remains difficult to understand how Paul could be so **tolerant** about a practice if that practice is so irrefragable past for the Christian and “cannot simply be pardoned”. No such enigma exists though in the relevant Scriptures. The difficulty results from fanciful or rather wilful surmising. The **Sabbath** is read into these Scriptures for **no** reason but the **Sunday-propagators’** dire need of anti-Sabbath matter of fact. In view of the fact they find nothing to suit their purpose they resort to judgement of the Sabbath-keeper as of the Sabbath. Then suddenly the Sabbath of the Lord your God, the Sabbath the Lord Jesus Christ claimed Himself Lord of, is the Jewish Sabbath, and he who keeps it becomes a Judaiser.*

The Christians of **Rome** made just such a boast of **their** “regard” of “days”, as did the **Galatians** of **their** “observation” of “days”. It remains difficult to understand how Paul could be so **intolerant** in the case of the Galatians yet so lenient in the case of the Romans about a practice **forever and everywhere** forbidden for the Christian and that **“cannot be pardoned”** at all.

It is true, **both** Churches *put the keeping of the Law against Christ as though salvation is contained in the keeping of the Law rather than in the faith in Christ*. Both Churches made of the Kingdom of God something else than “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”. One cannot understand why Paul would pardon the Rome Church but not the Galatians Church **if there had been no other reason of difference between them**. Arguments that the Sabbath had been the bone of contention are self-destructive for it presumes the same enthusiasm causing irreconcilable reactions on the part of Paul.

Paul in the Church at **Rome** found a **practice** he could live with, but a **motive** he could never tolerate. In Rome the practice was the mostly Jewish Believers’ “regard” paid “Jewish” “feast” “days”. Paul found it not only acceptable but partook in the practices himself. But Paul found **pride and exclusivity the motive behind** the practice. Paul judged this motive and motivation and condemned it. He could not disapprove of it more seriously. If one thinks Paul is not serious in his denunciation of the **Rome** Church’s pride, he has no inkling of what Paul says in Romans 14.

Paul also found both a practice and a motive in the Church of the **Galatians, he for his life could not permit**. It was not a “regard” for “Jewish” “feast” “days”. It was **Gentile converts’** idolatrous, “superstitious” “divination” of “days and months and times and years” – their “slavish worship” of “no-gods” and “weak and beggarly rulers”. But Paul found a further practice in the Galatians Church that disclosed the motive and the motivation behind the practice. It was the practice of circumcision. Circumcision was the insurance policy the Galatians signed and paid for security against the judgement of God over their godless relapse. Paul could say nothing else than what he says, You have fallen from grace. Christ shall avail you nothing. I am sorry. God forbid I am right and you really have gone so far.

8.4.
1 Corinthians 16:2
“On the First Day of the Week”

“The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath”
Jonathan Edwards

(Direct and exact quotations are printed *cursive, underlined*, and *“in quotation marks”*. When an idea different from the quoted author’s is expressed in his own words but not his own words exactly, that idea and those words are printed *cursive*. Supposed or imagined quotations are printed *cursive* and *‘in single and bold quotation marks’*. The reader may sometimes where I might have overseen its necessity, find this guideline not absolutely applied. **Emphasis** is CGE’s and employed discriminatingly. Emphasis may be indicated **in bold print**, or **bold and underlined**, or underlined, or *cursive*, or in larger or different format – depending on strength of emphasis contextually.)

The great mid-eighteenth century preacher and scholar Jonathan Edwards brought the issue of the interpretation and meaning of **1 Corinthians 16:2** from the perspective of *“The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath”* to finality – rightly so or wrongly. Since Edwards no one of the traditional standpoint has discovered a single original idea on this Scripture. Not surprising, he depletes every imaginable argument in favour of Sunday as the Christian Day of Worship under this Scripture!

As may be deduced from his choice of words, Edwards held a rather enigmatic view on the subject of “The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath”

The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol.2 The Banner of Truth Trust 1976.

“1 COR. xvi. 1,2,

8.4.1.
^{93a} **Sermon 13**
(pp. 184 to 242)

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the First Day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

We find in the New Testament often mentioned a certain collection, which was made by the Grecian churches, for the brethren in Judea, who were reduced to pinching want by a dearth which then prevailed, and was the heavier upon them by reason of their circumstances, they having been from the beginning oppressed and persecuted by the unbelieving Jews.

This collection or contribution is twice mentioned in the Acts, chap. xi. 28-30, and xxiv. 17. It is also noticed in several of the epistles; as Rom. xv. 26 and Gal. ii. 10. But it is most largely insisted on, in these two epistles to the Corinthians; in this first epistle, chap. xvi. and in the second epistle, chap. viii and ix. The apostle begins the directions, which in this place he delivers concerning this matter, with the words of the text; - wherein we may observe,

1. What is the thing to be done concerning which the apostle gives them direction, - the exercise and manifestation of their charity towards their brethren, by communicating to them, for the supply of their wants; which was by Christ and his apostles often insisted on, as one main duty of the Christian religion, and is expressly declared to be so by the apostle James, chap. i. 27. " Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

2. We may observe the time on which the apostle directs that this should be done, viz. "on the First Day of the week." By the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he insists upon it, that it be done on such a particular day of the week, as if no other day would do so well as that, or were so proper and fit a time for such a work. – Thus, although the inspired apostle was not for making that distinction of days in gospel times, which the Jews made, as appears by Gal. iv. 10, "Ye observe days, and months," &c. yet, here he gives the preference to one day of the week, before any other, for the performance of a certain great duty of Christianity.

3. It may be observed, that the apostle had given to **other churches**, that were concerned in the same duty, to do it on the First Day of the week: "As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." Whence we may learn, that it was nothing peculiar in the circumstances of the Christians at Corinth, which was the reason ^{93b} why the Holy Ghost insisted that they should perform this duty on this day of the week. The apostle had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia.

Now Galatia was far distant from Corinth; the sea parted them, and there were several other countries between them. Therefore it cannot be thought that the Holy Ghost directs them to this time upon any secular account, having respect to some particular circumstances of the people in that city, but upon a religious account. In giving the preference to this day for such work, before any other day, he has respect to something which reached all Christians throughout the wide world.

And by other passages of the New Testament, we learn that the case was the same as to other exercises of religion ; and that the First Day of the week was preferred before any other day, in churches immediately under the care of the apostles, for all attendance on the exercises of religion in general. Acts xx. 7, "Upon the First Day of the

week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." - it seems by these things to have been among the primitive Christians in the apostles' days, with respect to the First Day of the week, as it was among the Jews, with respect to the seventh.

We are taught by Christ, that the doing of alms and showing of mercy are proper works for the Sabbath-day. When the Pharisees found fault with Christ for suffering his disciples to pluck the ears of corn, and eat on the Sabbath, Christ corrects them with that saying, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;" Matt. xii. 7. And Christ teaches that works of mercy are proper to be done on the Sabbath, Luke xiii. 15, 16. and XIV. 5, - These works used to be done on sacred festivals and days of rejoicing, under the Old Testament, as in Nehemiah's and Esther's time; Neh. viii. 10. and Esth. ix. 19, 22, - And Josephus and Philo, two very noted Jews, who wrote not long after Christ's time, give an account that it was the manner among the Jews on the Sabbath, to make collections for sacred and pious uses.

DOCTRINE.

It is the mind and will of God that the First Day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians, for religious exercises and duties.

That this is the doctrine which the Holy Ghost intended to teach us, by this and other passages of the New Testament, I hope will appear plainly by the sequel. This is a doctrine that we have been generally brought up in by the instructions and examples of our ancestors; and it has been the general profession of the Christian world, that ^{94a} this day ought to be religiously observed and distinguished from other days of the week. However, some deny it. Some refuse to take notice of the day, as different from other days. Others own, that it is a laudable custom of the Christian church, into which she fell by agreement, and by appointment of her ordinary rulers, to set apart this day for public worship. But they deny any other original to such an observation of the day, than prudential human appointment. - Others religiously observe the Jewish Sabbath, as of perpetual obligation, and that we want a foundation for determining that that is abrogated, and another day of the week is appointed.

All these classes of men say, that there is no clear revelation that it is the mind and will of God, that the First Day of the week should be observed as a day to be set apart for religious exercises, in the room of the ancient Sabbath; which there ought to be in order to the observation of it by the Christian church, as a divine institution. They say, that we ought not to go upon the tradition of past ages, or upon uncertain and far-fetched inferences from some passages of the history of the New

Testament, or upon some obscure and uncertain hints in the apostolic writings; but that we ought to expect a plain institution; which, they say, we may conclude God would have given us, if he had designed that the whole Christian church, in all ages, should observe another day of the week for a holy Sabbath, than that which was appointed of old by plain and positive institution.

So far it is undoubtedly true, that if this be the mind and will of God, he has not left the matter to human tradition; but has so revealed his mind about it, in his Word, that there is to be found good and substantial evidence that it is his mind: and doubtless, the revelation is plain enough for them that have ears to hear; that is, for them that will justly exercise their understandings about what God says to them. No Christian, therefor, should rest till he has satisfactorily discovered the mind of God in this matter. If the Christian Sabbath be of divine institution, it is doubtless of great importance to religion that it be well kept; and therefore, that every Christian be well acquainted with the institution.

If men take it only upon trust, and keep the First Day of the week because their parents taught them so, or because they see others do it, they will never be likely to keep it so conscientiously and strictly, as if they had been convinced by seeing for themselves, that there are good grounds in the Word of God for their practice. Unless they do see thus for themselves, whenever they are negligent in sanctifying the Sabbath, or are guilty of profaning it, their consciences will not have that advantage to smite them for it, as otherwise they would. And those who have a sincere desire to obey God in all things, will keep the Sabbath more carefully and more cheerfully, if they have seen and been convinced that therein they do what is according to the will and command of God, and what is acceptable to him; and will also have a great deal more comfort in the reflection upon their having carefully and painfully kept the Sabbath.

Therefore, I design now, by the help of God, to show, that it is sufficiently revealed in the Scriptures, to be the mind and will of God, that the First Day of the week should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week, as a Sabbath, to be devoted to religious exercises.

In order to this, I shall here premise, that the mind and will of God, concerning any duty to be performed by us, may be sufficiently revealed in his word, without a particular precept in so many express terms, enjoining it. The human understanding is the ear to which the word of God is spoken; and if it be so spoken, that that ear may plainly hear it, it is enough. God is sovereign as to the manner of speaking his mind, whether he will speak it in express terms, or whether he will speak it by

saying several other things which may imply it, and from which we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive it. If the mind of God be but revealed, if there be but sufficient means for the communication of his mind to our minds, that is sufficient; whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes; or ^{94b} whether we see the thing that he would signify to us, by the eye of reason and understanding.

Who can positively say, that if it had been the mind of God, that we should keep the first day of the week, he would have commanded it in express terms, as he did the observation of the seventh day of old? Indeed, if God had so made our faculties, that we were not capable of receiving a revelation of his mind in any other way; then there would have been some reason to say so. But God has given us such understandings, as we are capable of receiving a revelation, when made in another manner. And if God deals with us agreeably to our natures, and in a way suitable to our capacities, it is enough. If God discovers his mind in any way whatsoever, provided it be according to our faculties, we are obliged to obedience; and God may expect our notice and observance of his revelation, in the same manner as if he had revealed it in express terms.

I shall speak upon this subject under these two general propositions.

1. It is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations.

2. It is sufficiently clear, that under the gospel-dispensation, this day is the first day of the week.

Proposition 1. It is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations; and not only among the ancient Israelites, till Christ came, but even in these gospel times, and among all nations professing Christianity. From the consideration of the nature and state of mankind in this world, it is most consonant to human reason, that certain fixed parts of time should be set apart, to be spent by the church wholly in religious exercises, and in the duties of divine worship. It is a duty incumbent on all mankind, in all ages alike, to worship and serve God. His service should be our great business. It becomes us to worship him with the greatest devotion and engagedness of mind; and therefore to put ourselves, at proper times, in such circumstances, as will most contribute to render our minds entirely devoted to this work, without being diverted or interrupted by other things.

The state of mankind in this world is such, that we are called to concern ourselves in secular business and affairs, which will necessarily, in a considerable degree, take up the thoughts and engage the attention of the mind. However some particular persons may be in circumstances more free and disengaged; yet the state of mankind is such, that the bulk of them, in all ages and nations, are called ordinarily to exercise their thoughts about secular affairs, and to follow worldly business, which, in its own nature, is remote from the solemn duties of religion.

It is therefore most meet and suitable, that certain times should be set apart, upon which men should be required to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may be the more freely and entirely engaged in spiritual exercises, in the duties of religion, and in the immediate Worship of God; and that their minds being disengaged from common concerns, their religion may not be mixed with them.

It is also suitable that these times should be fixed and settled, that the church may agree therein, and that they should be the same for all, that men may not interrupt one another; but may rather assist one another by mutual example: for example has a great influence in such cases. If there be a time set apart for public rejoicing, and there be a general manifestation of joy, the general example seems to inspire men with a spirit of joy; one kindles another. So, if it be a time of mourning, and there be general appearances and manifestations of sorrow, it naturally affects the mind, it disposes it to depression, it casts a gloom upon it, and does as it were dull and deaden the spirits. – So, if a certain time be set apart as holy time, for general devotion, and solemn religious exercises, a general example tends to render the spirit serious and solemn.

2. Without doubt, one proportion of time is better and ^{95a} fitter than another for this purpose. One proportion is more suitable to the state of mankind, and will have a greater tendency to answer the ends of such times, than another. The times may be too far asunder. I think human reason is sufficient to discover, that it would be too seldom for the purposes of such solemn times, that they should be but once a year. So, I conclude, nobody will deny, but that such times may be too near together to agree with the state and necessary affairs of mankind.

Therefore, there can be no difficulty in allowing, that some certain proportion of time, whether we can exactly discover it or not, is really fittest and best – considering the end for which such times are kept, and the condition, circumstances, and necessary affairs of men; and considering what the state of man is, taking one age and nation with another – more convenient and suitable than any other; which God may know and exactly determine, though we, by reason of the scantiness of

our understandings, cannot.

As a certain frequency of the returns of these times may be more suitable than any other, so one length or continuance of the times themselves may be fitter than another, to answer the purposes of such times. If such times, when they come, were to last but an hour, it would not well answer the end; for then worldly things would crowd too nearly upon sacred exercises, and there would not be that opportunity to get the mind so thoroughly free and disengaged from other things, as there would be if the times were longer. Being so short, sacred and profane things would be as it were mixed together. Therefore, a certain distance between these times, and a certain continuance of them when they come, is more proper than others; which God knows and is able to determine, though perhaps we cannot.

3. It is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that God's working six days, and resting the seventh, and blessing and hallowing it, was to be of general use in determining this matter, and that it was written, that the practice of mankind in general might some way or other be regulated by it. What could be the meaning of God's resting the seventh day, and hallowing and blessing it, which he did, before the giving of the fourth commandment, unless he hallowed and blessed it with respect to mankind? For he did not bless and sanctify it with respect to himself, or that he within himself might observe it: as that is most absurd. And it is unreasonable to suppose that he hallowed it only with respect to the Jews, a particular nation, which rose up above two thousand years after.

So much therefore must be intended by it, that it was his mind, that mankind should, after his example, work six days, and then rest, and hallow or sanctify the next following; and that they should sanctify every seventh day, or that the space between rest and rest, one hallowed time and another, among his creatures here upon earth, should be six days. — So that it hence appears to be the mind and will of God, that not only the Jews, but men in all nations and ages, should sanctify one day in seven: which is the thing we are endeavouring to prove.

4. The mind of God in this matter is clearly revealed in the fourth commandment. The will of God is there revealed, not only that the Israelitish nation, but that all nations, should keep every seventh day holy; or, which is the same thing, one day after every sixth. This command, as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation, at least, as to the substance of it, as is intimated by its being engraven on the tables of stone. Nor is it to be thought that Christ ever abolished any command of the ten; but that there is the complete number ten yet, and will be to the end of the world.

Some say, that the fourth command is perpetual, but not in its literal sense; not as designing any particular proportion of time to be set

apart and devoted to literal rest and religious exercises. They say that it stands in force only in a mystical sense, viz. as that weekly rest of the Jews typified spiritual rest in the Christian church; and that we under the Gospel are not to make any distinction of one day from another, but are to keep all time holy, doing every thing in a spiritual manner.

But this is an absurd way of interpreting the command,^{95b}
as it refers to Christians. For if the command be so far abolished, it is entirely abolished. For it is the very design of the command, to fix the time of worship. The first command fixes the object, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time. And, if it stands in force now only as signifying a spiritual, Christian rest, and holy behaviour at all times, it does not remain as one of the ten commands, but as a summary of all the commands.

The main objection against the perpetuity of this command is, that the duty required is not moral. Those laws whose obligation arises from the nature of things, and from the general state and nature of mankind, as well as from God's positive revealed will, are called moral laws. Others, whose obligation depends merely upon God's positive and arbitrary institution, are not moral; such as the ceremonial laws, and the precepts of the Gospel, about the two sacraments.^(see pp 225-226)
Now, the objectors say, they will allow all that is moral in the decalogue to be of perpetual obligation; but this command, they say, is not moral.

But this objection is weak and insufficient for the purpose for which it is brought, or to prove that the fourth command, as to the substance of it, is not of perpetual obligation. For,

(1.) If it should be allowed that there is no morality belonging to the command, and that the duty required is founded merely on arbitrary institution, it cannot therefore be certainly concluded that the command is not perpetual. We know that there may be commands in force under the Gospel, and to the end of the world, which are not moral: such are the institutions of the two sacraments. And why may there not be positive commands in force in all ages of the church? If positive, arbitrary institutions are in force in gospel-times, what is there which concludes that no positive precept given before the times of the gospel can yet continue in force. But,

(2.) As we have observed already, the thing in general, that there should be certain fixed parts of time set apart to be devoted to religious exercises, is founded in the fitness of the thing, arising from the nature of things, and the nature and universal state of mankind. Therefore, there is as much reason that there should be a command of perpetual and universal obligation about this, as about any other duty whatsoever. For if the thing in general, that there be a time fixed, be founded in the nature of things, there is consequent upon it a necessity, that the time be limited

by a command; for there must be a proportion of time fixed, or else the general moral duty cannot be observed.

(3.) The particular determination of the proportion of time in the fourth commandment, is also founded in the nature of things, only our understandings are not sufficient absolutely to determine it of themselves. We have observed already, that without doubt one proportion of time is in itself fitter than another, and a certain continuance of time fitter than any other, considering the universal state and nature of mankind, which God may see, though our understandings are not perfect enough absolutely to determine it. So that the difference between this command and others, does not lie in this, that other commands are founded in the fitness of the things themselves, arising from the universal state and nature of mankind, and this not; but, only that the fitness of other commands is more obvious to the understandings of men, and they might have seen it of themselves; but this could not be precisely discovered and positively determined without the assistance of revelation.

So that the command of God, that every seventh day should be devoted to religious exercises, is founded in the universal state and nature of mankind, as well as other commands; only man's reason is not sufficient, without divine direction, so exactly to determine it: though perhaps man's reason is sufficient to determine, that it ought not to be much seldomer, nor much oftener, than once in seven days.

5. God appears in his word laying abundantly more weight on the precept concerning the Sabbath, than on any precept of the ceremonial law. It is in the decalogue, one of the ten commands, which were delivered by God with an audible voice. It was written with his own finger

on ^{96a} the tables of stone in the mount, and was appointed afterwards to be written on the tables which Moses made. The keeping of the weekly Sabbath is spoken of by the prophets, as that wherein consists a great part of holiness of life; and is inserted among moral duties, Isa. Iviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it."

6. It is foretold, that this command should be observed in gospel-times; as in Isaiah lvi. at the beginning, where the due observance of the Sabbath is spoken of as a great part of holiness of life, and is placed among moral duties. It is also mentioned as a duty that should be most acceptable to God from his people, even where the prophet is speaking of

gospel-times; as in the foregoing chapter, and in the first verse of this chapter. And, in the third and fourth verses, the prophet is speaking of the abolition of the ceremonial law in gospel-times, and particularly of that law, which forbids eunuchs to come into the congregation of the Lord. Yet, here the man is pronounced blessed, who keeps the Sabbath from polluting it, ver. 2. And even in the very sentence where the eunuchs are spoken of as being free from the ceremonial law, they are spoken of as being yet under obligation to keep the Sabbath, and actually keeping it, as that which God lays great weight upon: "For thus saith the Lord, unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, ^{96b} and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."

Besides, the strangers spoken of in the sixth and seventh verses, are the Gentiles, that should be called in the times of the gospel, as is evident by the last clause in the seventh, and by the eighth verse: "For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him." Yet it is represented here as their duty to keep the Sabbath: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, everyone that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer."

7. A further argument for the perpetuity of the Sabbath, we have in Matt. xxiv. 20. "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day." Christ is here speaking of the flight of the apostles and other Christians out of Jerusalem and Judea, just before their final destruction, as is manifest by the whole context, and especially by the 16th verse: "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." But this final destruction of Jerusalem was after the dissolution of the Jewish constitution, and after the Christian dispensation was fully set up. Yet, it is plainly implied in these words of our Lord, that even then Christians were bound to a strict observation of the Sabbath.

Thus I have shown, that it is the will of God, that every seventh day be devoted to rest and to religious exercises.

8.4.1.2.
The “Collection”
 8.4.1.2.1.
“A Certain Collection”

“We find in the New Testament often mentioned **a certain collection**, which was made by the Grecian churches, for the brethren in Judea ...”.

Edwards supplies several characteristics of this “collection”.

1. He calls it a “**collection or contribution**”.

2. He says it “**was made by the ... churches**”.

3. The “**collection**” was **circumstantial**, being made for **1**, “**the brethren in Judea ... who were reduced to pinching want by, 2, a dearth that was ... by reason of their circumstances**”. **3**, Edwards gives the “**matter**” a **time in history**. It was the “**dearth that then, prevailed**”. **4**, Edwards gives the “**matter**” an **explanation** – the famine was **exceptional**: it “**prevailed**”. **5**, He supplies it with a **cause**. “**As reason**”, says he, it “**was made ... for the brethren in Judea ... they having been ... oppressed and persecuted by the unbelieving Jews**”.

4. “**We find (it) in the New Testament often mentioned**”.

Specifically, “**this collection or contribution is twice mentioned in the Acts**”. It is “**noted**” and “**insisted on**” as “**a (single) great duty**”. This **specific undertaking** on behalf of the **Judea brethren** is so “**often mentioned**” in the Epistles and in the Acts for the very reason of the **unprecedented historic incidence** of famine and want that “**was the heavier upon them**” in **Judea** “**by reason of their circumstances**”. Had the **circumstance of the Judea Christians** not been exceptional and peculiar, the Christian duty of charity although always being observed would not so exceptionally have been noticed and described in the Letters and Acts **as pertaining this incidence and undertaking**.

5, YET, “**nothing**” about this “**collection**”, says Edwards, was “**peculiar**”. “**It was nothing peculiar in the circumstances of the Christians ... which was the reason why ... they should perform this duty**”. “**It cannot be thought ... on any secular account, having respect to some particular circumstances of the people ...**”.

Edwards obviously and directly **contradicts** himself. He either ignorantly errs, or cunningly deceives. Honest men devoted to the ministry of the Gospel and very fruitfully so, when they treat on the vital matter of the Christian Day of Worship, surprise by their vulnerability. Edwards says “**nothing**” about this “**collection**” was “**peculiar**”. “**It was nothing peculiar in the circumstances of the Christians ... which was the reason why ... they should perform this duty**”. “**It cannot be thought ... on any secular account, having respect to some particular circumstances**

of the people ...”. Edwards claims this **generality**, **DESPITE** the fact that the “**collection**” “**was made**”, **1**, “**for the brethren in Judea**”, **2**, “**for the brethren who were reduced to pinching want**” and, **3**, upon whom the famine “**was the heavier by reason of their circumstances**”.

6, Edwards **generalises** the nature of this, unique, “**certain collection**”. “**A (single) great duty**”, becomes “**such (general, perpetual) work**”. Of “**the thing to be done**” – that is, of the “**certain collection**” – “**concerning which the apostle gives them (the churches in Galatia) direction**”, Edwards makes “**a certain great (general, perpetual) duty of Christianity**” – simply, **the** Christian duty. Of the “**certain collection**”, because “**having respect to ... the people**”, he makes the one general obligation of Christianity. Edwards **universalises** “**a**” (single) and “**certain**”, specific “**collection**”, into the “**one main duty of the Christian religion**”, the **all-time** “**exercise and manifestation of charity**”.

7, How does Edwards manage to so generalise the issue? **1**, The “**Holy Ghost**”, says he, “**has respect to something which, 2, reached all Christians throughout the wide world**”. **3, Not** because the effects of the “**dearth**” were felt throughout the world, but because “**the apostles had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia**” and because Paul “**has respect to something which reached all Christians throughout the wide world**.” Edwards uses the **comparative** adjective, “**the heavier**”; he employs a **superlative** verb, “**prevailed**”; he **delimits** a relevant adverb of time, “**then**”.

But the true facts were that not Corinth, or Galatia, or the “**wide world**”, were affected by this “**dearth**” **as was Judea**. The “**collection ... was made by the Grecian churches, for the brethren in Judea, who (unlike the rest of the world) were reduced to pinching want**”. Although the *Grecian churches* also felt the *pinch*, they were still in a position wherein they could “**manage**” – *logia < logidzomai*, to contribute to the wants of the Judea Church, “**who**”, without the help of their fellow Christians, would starve!

The “**circumstances**” were **not the reverse**. Paul from the nature of the case **exempted** the Judea Church from contributing to the “**collection**”. It was collected **for them**, after all. The Church did **not universally** contribute and one could **in this case not** view **this-instance-of-Christian-“charity”**, as the **usual-and-general-liturgical-practice-of-Christian-“charity”**. This **specific “collection”** happened **not** to the **usual manner** among Christians. It was but **one** and **exceptional** instance for the need of the general Christian thing of charity. The Church now must put its money where its mouth is; must now for once practice what it preaches, to put it bluntly!

Nothing peculiar in the circumstances of the Christians at Corinth ... but the peculiar circumstances of the Christians in Judea ... was the reason why the Holy Ghost insisted that everybody but the Christians in Judea should perform this, once-occurring, duty! Two, different things, both of one moral principle are involved: the Christians in Judea remained under the general obligation to practice Christian charity, while, at the same time, they were excluded from contributing to this specific collection!

As for the situation or circumstance of things then, *the apostles gave different orders to the churches of Galatia – inter alia to the Congregation of Corinth – and the churches of Judea. And Paul gave instructions, not with respect to some particular circumstances of the people in Corinth, but with respect to the particular circumstances of the people in Judea.*

Indeed the peculiar and different, *circumstances* everywhere, *were the reason why the Corinth Church should have performed this duty. It must – having respect to some particular circumstances of the people in Judea – be thought on secular account why the Church should have contributed to their needs. However, “upon a religious account”, in fact, on account of the Holy Ghost the “exercise and manifestation of (Christian) charity” was the real motivation behind Paul’s “order”. The peculiar exercise was based on the general and moral principles of the Christian Faith – on the principle of charity.*

8.4.1.2.2.

“What is the thing?”

“We may observe” ... “What is the thing to be done concerning which the apostle gives them direction, – the exercise and manifestation of their charity towards their brethren, by communicating to them for the supply of their wants; which was by Christ and his apostles often insisted on, as one main duty of the Christian religion, and is expressly declared to be so by the apostle James, chap. 1:27. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.””

There is a basic inaccuracy in Edwards’ statement. This undertaking was the apostles’ and especially Paul’s, in obedience to Christ’s example and commandment of charity. This undertaking, this time, was the apostles’ and especially Paul’s, in obedience to the *one main duty of the Christian religion often insisted on by Christ and his apostles. With this undertaking, this time, the Grecian Church receives occasion and opportunity to execute “pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father: This, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” as expressly declared by the apostle James, chap. 1:27.*

This, in Corinthians, was it: Christian Charity; but this, was not the usual; this, was the exceptional.

“What is the thing”, in this case, in this place, Corinth, and in this Scripture, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, “to be done concerning which the apostle gives them direction”? It was but one and unique and specific instance of the performance of the “one main duty of the Christian religion”, charity. It was “the exercise and manifestation of their charity towards their brethren, by communicating to them for the supply of their wants” that cannot be referred to but by the peculiarities and circumstances of the one case – and that may not be referred to by the generality and permanence of its principle.

Of what Paul says, “As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia to do”, of this he says, “even so do ye”. He means the believers to understand, “Even so do ye it” – that is, “Even so do ye the same collection”! Paul “in this place, with the words of the text”, “concerning the collection”, writes, “as I have given orders”. He does not write nor “gives orders” in general terms concerning the general principle of charity, but concerning the specific occurrence of its practice.

Edwards sees for one, “the thing”, and the principle, of “charity”. He identifies “the thing to be done”, and “concerning which the apostle gives them direction” in this instance, and the perpetual and general Christian duty of “charity towards their brethren ... which was by Christ and his apostles often insisted on”. Of course “the thing” and “charity” in principle are the same; but “peculiarly”, they are not. (For instance, Christ Himself never “insisted on” the Corinthian Church in this “peculiar” instance of charity “concerning” “their Judean brethren”.) Edwards mistakes the part for the whole; the particular for the general; the unique for the usual. “The thing to be done concerning which the apostle gives them direction” was “the collection”. “The collection” was but one aspect of Christian charity, “then”, and, on this occasion, specifically undertaken for the peculiar circumstances that “prevailed” and from the nature of the case was never to be repeated.

8.4.1.2.3.

“A Certain Collection”,

Or,

“The First Day Before Any Other Day”?

The basic inaccuracy in this statement is taken a huge step further. By miss-applying the pure Christian principle of love in quoting James, “preference is given”, says Edwards, not to “a certain collection”, but to “this day ... the First Day of the week ... before any other day”! The “something” Paul “has respect to” and “which reached all Christians throughout the wide world”, according to Edwards, now “concerns” not the “collection”, but “the time ... viz. ... the first day of the week”!

But Paul **in no way** gives orders of **general principle** “**concerning the First Day**”. The First Day is **only incidentally involved** in this specific incidence of the practice of Christian charity! Hence we **cannot learn** and **may** not teach that Christians **as a great Christian duty for all time, should perform this duty on this (same) day of the week**. Paul gives instruction “**concerning a certain collection**” that it should be done on the First Day **for the very reason of its exceptional nature and occurrence! Temporality and extraordinariness** are the first reason why Paul recommends the Corinthian and Galatian Churches should perform the duty of this collection on the **First Day** of the week.

Now supposed **without** the “**collection**” being “**most largely insisted on**” (and Christian Charity **unaffected** any which way), and supposed **without** the **particular** reason of the special “**directions, which in this place Paul delivers**”, **the mention of the First Day would have been totally pointless.**

(It is as **pointless** that Edwards argues, “*Now Galatia was far distant from Corinth; the sea parted them, and there were several other countries between them*”. No one denies these things and no one does not know these things, just as no one denies the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in this matter and in this Scripture.)

It **cannot** be deduced from these facts and be said, “*It cannot be thought that the Holy Ghost directs*” Paul to the First Day “*on any secular account*”, because **exactly a secular account was the case and reason** for Paul to give these his special and particular instructions. A **famine** was the reason for this, a **famine** felt most severely in **Judea** and worst among the **Christians** of Judea because of the Jews persecuting them. Paul *upon a religious account* then, *having respect to the general religious duty of Christian charity*, called upon the Church in Corinth to have respect towards those under greater and graver **secular** need – in this instance to have respect to the **bread and water needs** of the Christians in Judea. Paul on **strength of religious** or moral “**account**” gave “**directions**” on **secular** “**account**”.

It cannot be observed, that because the apostle had given to other churches that were concerned, that because the apostles had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia, that because they reached all Christians throughout the wide world, that “therefore”, they had to perform this duty on this day of the week. There is no logic – no “reason” in such reasoning and no truth. Paul advised them in **Corinth** to “work out and save”, “on the First Day”. **That** is the only thing that from the instruction of the text may be deduced – inference does not exceed given fact concerning the First Day of the week.

If the collection had been the **normal** thing and consequential on “**religious account**”, Paul **would not have needed** to “give directions”,

in fact, **special** directions, that it should be done “on the **First Day** of the week”. *That the apostle had given to other churches that were concerned in the same duty to also “perform this duty”, does not* require that Paul had **also** given directions that they should do it “**on the first day of the week**”. Paul, on the one hand, also to the **other** Congregations would have “instructed” the First Day for the purpose of the “collection” if he for some reason was **compelled** to “**instruct**” it to the Corinthian Congregation. He does **not** mention the First Day where he elsewhere “**instructs**” the other Churches in the matter of the “**collection**”. On the other hand, had the First Day been observed “**religiously**” among the apostles and in the Church, Paul would not have “**instructed**” the First Day to **any!** To repeat, the fact that Paul “**instructs**” the First Day to the Corinthians implies it was not **strictly or otherwise** the day for Christian Charity. **But – in contrast – while so often specifically mentioned, whenever the Sabbath is not thus indicated, its matter of course observance must necessarily be supposed and implied.**

The fact that Paul “instructed” the First Day to the Corinthians in the matter of the “collection”, meant not that they or any Christian believers were “**observers**” of that day, or that they were brought under unchangeable rule henceforth to observe it or to do anything at all. Paul forced to conform no one regarding the collection or the day! Paul meant no and supposed no divine “**order**” concerning anything except indirectly, first, the Christian principle of charity, and, two, the observance of the Seventh Day Sabbath. Not even for the Corinthian Church of the day did Paul’s “instruction” mean that they **must** save up on the **First Day**. **Much less** did it mean that they must “**keep holy** (as a Sabbath)” the First Day of the week! It only meant for the Corinthian Church, that a Christian, shall practice charity, and in this instance they were afforded **opportunity** to practice what they believed. Paul’s first concern is not so much the manner or time of performing the “management” or “accounting” or “collection” – *logia*, but the **performing** of it. He had the Corinthians’ **normal routine** in mind and accordingly advised them to “*individually at home*”, “*work out*”, and “*save up*”, little by little each week “*on the First Day of the week*”. “Do it on the First Day of your week”, says Paul, thinking of the Corinthians’ **working** week – **with the view to the bringing together in Church on the Sabbath Day** of each one’s saved up contribution, in order to be sent from there to Jerusalem.

The fact that “*the apostles had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia*” on the matter of the collection, does **not necessarily** mean that the First Day had also to be included under such orders. And then the fact that “*the apostles had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia*” on the matter of the collection, and the **possibility** that such “**orders**” **could** also have involved the First Day, does not make the First

Day to become the “ordered” Christian Day of Worship and Rest. The fact that Paul brings the First Day in the case of the Corinthian Church into the scope of practice, does not mean it was **indispensable or compulsory!** No! the duty of Christian **charity** is necessarily supposed and necessarily taken for granted **with the view to** the collection, but Paul only orders the **collection** as such to be done on the First Day.

If the Corinth believers did not save up their contributions on the First Day **it would not have been a sin** and Paul would not have viewed it as rejection of his apostolic authority. If the Corinth believers did not save up a contribution **at all, that** would have been unacceptable and inexplicable, and Paul would have had reason for concern about the genuineness of their “*religion*”. One justly may think the Corinthian Congregation would not neglect their Day of Worship nor their Christian duty of charity had they performed their “saving up” of the “calculated contribution” on **another day** than the First Day of the week. Paul is as lenient concerning the **day** as he is lenient concerning the **method** and the **amount** that each believer had to decide on “privately” and “according to his prosperity”. **Whether or not** Paul “so instructed / gave orders”, **whether or not** he “*instructs*” the First Day for the believer’s “saving up their contributions”, **whether or not** he does so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul **simply** and **no more** than **recommends** the First Day for reasons of **particular** circumstances primarily, and for the reason of the Sabbath’s **normal** observance, secondarily. **The meaning of the passage**

(1 Cor.16:1-2) is that Paul “**recommended**”. And the truth of the **Holy Spirit’s** guidance and authority makes of Paul’s “instruction” no more than a **recommendation**. A new Christian Pharisaism or Judaism Paul’s “orders” **are not**.

Behind Paul’s recommendation **another factor**, concerning which the Holy Spirit’s guidance cannot be denied, is discernible, and that is the **real, practical and obligatory** factor that supplies the reason for Paul’s preference for the First Day of the week for the “saving up”, “each at his own house”, “as God prospered him”, “so that when I come, there must be no collection”. **That factor is the Christian Communities’ habit and indeed conscientious and dutiful observance of the Sabbath Day – Seventh Day of the week!**

8.4.1.2.4.

An Arrangement of Good Judgement

Paul “**arranged**” – *diatacsa*, for the Corinth Church as he “arranged” for the Churches in Galatia. Compare 7:17, 9:14, 11:34, Titus 1:5, Gl.3:19. The AV translates *diatacsa* with “to ordain”, “to set in order”, “to appoint”. Paul without exception uses the word **circumstantially**. He would like to see the believers acting responsibly,

wise and orderly. He recommends the **First Day of the six workdays** of the week for this **monetary** task be it Christian duty. Clearly Paul in no instance of the word *diatacsa*’s use sets a rule of law or even just a recommendation for Christians **of all times**. In 1 Corinthians 16 as well, Paul sets no rule or law or even just a recommendation for Christians **of all times** concerning the **First Day** of the week.

But **granted** “*the apostle directs that this should be done, viz. “on the first day of the week”*”, and, **even granted** “*by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*” he does so, and **granted** “*upon a religious account*” “*he insists upon it*”; and **granted** “*that it be done on such a particular day of the week, as if no other day would do so well as that, or were so proper and fit a time for such a work*”, and **granted** that day being the First Day of the week, *the inspired apostle was NOT for making that distinction of days in gospel times, which the Jews made. He here gives NO “preference of one day of the week, before any other, for the great duty to have been among the primitive Christians in the apostles’ days, with respect to the first day of the week, as it was among the Jews, with respect to the seventh”*. **In other words, Paul does not treat the First Day as were it the Christian Day of Worship.** To infer such from

1 Cor.16:1-2 would be **more** than “*the text*” factually and truthfully says or intends to say or implies. “*The great duty to have been among the primitive Christians in the apostles’ days*” which Paul has in mind, was **this instance** of the Christian discipline of charity, and **not** “*with respect to the first day of the week*”!

The circumstance of the want or “*dearth*” wasn’t restricted to Judea, but **at the time** was **universal** – only in Judea it was **worse** than anywhere else. Although **natural calamities** and **not** “*the unbelieving Jews*” who “*oppressed and persecuted*” them, were the cause of the Christians’ dire needs, “*the unbelieving Jews*” certainly made it no easier for the Christians. *By reason of very “peculiar” “circumstances”* then, *having respect to it on secular account – the want by a dearth, that then, prevailed* and was the more *pinching and heavier upon the people and brethren in that country of Judea*, Paul “*on religious account*” “gave order”.

It was **not** the “*peculiar circumstance*” of the **Corinth** Church or of the Church **universal** that gave occasion for the exercise of Christian charity in this case. The Corinthians were better off than their brethren in Judea. Not on any specific “*secular account*” of **want** on the part of the “*people of that city*”, **Corinth**, did Paul “give order concerning the collection”, that “everyone must lay by himself in store on the First Day of the week”. **Nor did Paul on moral or religious account of the value or nature of the First Day of the week, “give order concerning the collection”**.

While *the exercise and manifestation of charity towards the brethren was by Christ and his apostles often insisted on, as one main duty of the Christian religion, and is expressly declared to be so by the apostle James, chap. 1:27, “the thing” to be done concerning which the apostle Paul in First Corinthians gives direction – be it the “exercise and manifestation of their charity towards their brethren” – was not the general, and it cannot be usually, customarily, formally or liturgically be related to the First Day or to an observance of the First Day. Only this exercise and manifestation of charity towards their brethren in Judea relates to the First Day – on Paul’s recommendation, as it relates to the Corinth Church specifically – on Paul’s recommendation, and that, not usually, customarily, formally or liturgically on Christ’s own or on the Church universal’s recommendation or order!*

8.4.1.2.5.1.

A Planned Collection

Says Paul, “**Every First Day** of the week (*kata mian*) **every one of you** (*hekastos humohn*) **by himself** (*par’ heautohi*) **should lay by him** (*tithetoh*), **storing up** (*thehsaurizohn*), **that whatever** (*ho to ean*) he has been prospered (*eudohtai*).

Paul **identifies** the “*collection*” or “gathering” or “offering”, with **that which** every believer, “as God enabled him”, “**saved up**”, “**at home**”. The “collection” is **each** person’s **private** “savings” for the brethren in Judea. According to “*the text*”, Paul “*concerning the collection*” (*peri tehs logheias*) advises (*dietacsa*) **only** on the aspect of its **private, individual** accumulation or “saving” or “collection”, so “that there be **no collections** (*logheiai*) when I come!” **This is categorical.** *Nothing of this when I come!* It presupposes **previous accomplishment** of the aim by **regular, individual** effort. This specific exercise or aim, the “**collection**” / “calculated amount” < *loghia* – “**sum**”, Paul distinguishes from general “**charity**”. He **distinguishes** the private **attempt** of it, and the **principle cause** of the attempt. He distinguishes **the thing that inspired** the believers to give as much as they could, from their circumstantial and individual “savings” **as such**.

Says Paul, “And when I come, I will send whomsoever you approve with your letters to bring your **charity** (*tehn charin*) to Jerusalem”, **verse 3. Here** Paul uses that word of Christian **liturgical** discipline. “Charity” comes from – *heh charis*. “**Charity**” **occurs**, says Paul, “when I come”, “**and when**” (*hotan de*) “you”, the Corinthian **Church**, “approve” delegates whom I then send with “letters”, to the beneficiaries. This **necessarily** implies the actual **occurrence** of “**Congregational**”, **liturgical** exercise of “charity”. It implies **The-for-the-purpose-Congregated** liturgical function of **worship. Then only** occurs or happens what in liturgical “**Church**”-sense, is called “**charity**”!

This, is the believers’ doings **when** they are congregated and worshipping. This, is **not**, “**each one’s**”, “**private**”, “**saving up**”, “**at home**”, which Paul recommends for the **First Day**: Of this preparatory “administration” - *logia*, Paul says, “**NOT when I come!**”

“Now **I will come unto** you”, continues Paul in verse 5, “when I shall pass through Macedonia because I (in any case) am going through Macedonia. And possibly I shall stay with you or even spend the winter. I may not see you in the near future, but if the Lord permit I hope some time for you will be granted me.” (verses 5-6) Now imagine Paul visiting the Macedonian Church – “*coming to you*” – but not **going to Church** with them? **To worship** with them must be Paul’s sole wish! And it of course would be to worship with the Church **on the Day of Worship**. When Paul would arrive, he would not be bothered with “**business - logia**” – the “business” of the **First Day!** No, Paul when “**coming**”, would like to **worship** with them **then**, and to worship **with the Church assembled. Then** – on such occasion – Paul would have letters written and delegates chosen to bring their “**charity**” - *tehn charin*, to Jerusalem – all **collectively** and, **all** individual and private “business” of the **First Day, over!**

As “*peculiar*” and **temporary** as the occurrence of the Judea charity undertaking was, so “*peculiar*” and **temporary** was **the choice of the First Day for “their business”**.

8.4.1.2.5.2.

The Occasion for Charity

“**When I come**”, says Paul, using the word *eleusomai* < *erchomai*. In 14:6 he says, “**If I come to you speaking** with tongues”, meaning, “when I **preach** to you with clarity and inspiration”. In 2:1 he says, “Brethren, **when I come to you**, I come not with excellency of **speech**”, meaning, when I **proclaim** to you God’s Word, I excel not in my own wisdom and oratory. In 4:19-21 Paul says, “But **I will come to you** shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the **speech** of them that are puffed up, but the **power** – for the Kingdom of God is not in (mere) word but in power (of true **proclamation**). What will you have, that I shall come to you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?”

When Paul says, “*when I come to you*”, he supposes the **Congregation** and the **Preaching** of the Kingdom of God – the **hearing and being of God’s Church**. (See also 2 Cor.11:4 *et al.*) Here in 1 Corinthians 16 when the Church assembles in holy act of worship, Paul says, “No collection **when I come to worship with you!**” “*You must do your business on the First Day of the week, says Paul! When we worship, we shall only choose the delegates to send your charity to Judea.*”

Now follow Paul’s “**coming through**” (*dierchomai*) Macedonia – verse 5. **Where** do we find him going? To the **Synagogue** or Church!

What do we find him doing? **Preaching** the Kingdom of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

When do we find him doing it? **On the Sabbath Day!** With whom do we find Paul worshipping? With **Christians!** With whom do we find him “staying” (verse 6)? **With Sabbath keepers!**

Why then does Paul advise the First Day for the purpose of saving up one’s collection for the brethren in Judea? **Because every Christian has worked for six days and the Sabbath Day rested.** The first opportune day for the “business” of “managing” (*logeiai*) their “income/prosperity”, would be the First Day of the week. ‘Therefore do it on the First Day of the week!’ Paul “by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost insists upon it”. ‘While you remember still the previous week’s gains and losses and while the charitable recollection of the Sabbath still warms your heart, “on the First Day of the week **work out**” how you have prospered. Don’t postpone. You don’t know what the future holds. Don’t allow another day to blur your memory. “Work out from what you have earned” (“save as you have prospered”) for the past week, and “accordingly” (“as”), “save up” (“storing up”). “At your own home, in your own privacy” (“each of you by himself”). Uninfluenced by what others may do or neglect, save up, each week, so that you won’t have to give all at one blow, but little by little, as God has prospered you.’

Thus “We may observe the **time** on which the apostle directs that this should be done, viz. “on the first day of the week”. By the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he insists upon it, that it be done on such a particular day of the week, as if no other day would do so well as that, or were so proper and fit a time for such a work. Thus, ... the inspired apostle ... here gives the preference of one day of the week, before any other, for the performance of a certain great duty of Christianity” – the “Christian duty” indeed, of “every one”, “at home”, “saving up”, his “collection”, “for the brethren in Judea”, “as God prospered” him – “every First Day of the week”.

8.4.1.2.5.3.

Not on the Sabbath!

We thus, also should observe the time on which the apostle directs that this should **NOT** be done, viz. on the **Sabbath Day**. Thus, although the inspired apostle was not for making that distinction of days in gospel times which the Jews made, he here by implication and unavoidably gives the preference of one day of the week, in fact, of the **Sabbath Day**. He here gives preference **of the Sabbath Day** before any other, for the performance of **the certain great duty of Christianity**, viz., the duty of **abstaining** from *logeias* and *thehsauridzohn* – that is, the duty of **abstaining** from “business” and “savings” – and being employed in the duty of “**worship**” and **Christian** “charity” in the sense of its **collective**

exercise through **congregation, worship** and **proclamation** – in the sense of “*all attendance on the exercises of religion in general*”!

By the inspiration of the Holy Ghost Paul insists upon it. And by other passages of the New Testament, we learn that the case was the same as to other exercises of religion. ... It seems by these things to have been among the primitive Christians in the apostles’ days with respect to the **Seventh Day** of the week (as it was among the Jews).

8.4.1.2.5.4.

Two Texts, the One of which is Acts 20:7

“*And by other passages of the New Testament, we learn that the case was the same as to other exercises of religion; and that the **First Day of the week was preferred before any other day, in churches immediately under the care of the apostles, for all attendance on the exercises of religion in general.** Acts xx. 7, “Upon the First Day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” - it seems **by these things** to have been among the primitive Christians in the apostles’ days, with respect to the **First Day of the week, as it was among the Jews, with respect to the seventh.**” See Part 2 of Part 3, Par. 7.2, “Troas”.*

8.4.1.2.5.5.

(True) Christian Charity

We are taught by Christ, that the doing of alms and showing of mercy are proper works for the Sabbath-day. When the Pharisees found fault with Christ for suffering his disciples to pluck the ears of corn, and eat on the Sabbath, Christ corrects them with that saying, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice;” Matt. xii, 7. And Christ teaches that works of mercy are proper to be done on the Sabbath, Luke xiii. 15, 16. and XIV. 5. - These works used to be done on sacred festivals and days of rejoicing, under the Old Testament, as in Nehemiah’s and Esther’s time; Neh. viii. 10. and Esth. ix. 19, 22. - And Josephus and Philo, two very noted Jews, who wrote not long after Christ’s time, give an account that it was the manner among the Jews on the Sabbath, to make collections for sacred and pious uses.”

Edwards argues from the Sabbath but insists on the First Day for its benefit!

8.4.1.3.

“DOCTRINE”

“*It is the mind and will of God that **the First Day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians, for religious exercises and duties.**”*

“*It is the mind and will of God?*”

“*That this is the doctrine?*”

“*Which the Holy Ghost intended to teach us?*”

“By this and other passages of the New Testament, I hope will appear plainly by the sequel.”

*“This is a doctrine that we have been generally **brought up in** by the instructions and examples of our ancestors; and it has been the general profession of the **Christian world** that this day ought to be religiously observed and distinguished from other days of the week.”*

Absolutely!

*“However, some deny it. Some refuse to take notice of the day, as different from other days. Others own, that it is a **laudable custom** of the Christian church, into which she **fell** by agreement, and by appointment of her ordinary rulers, to set apart this day for public worship. But they deny any other original to such an observation of the day, than prudential human appointment.”*

*“Others religiously observe the Jewish Sabbath, as of perpetual obligation, and that we **want a foundation** for determining that that is abrogated, and another day of the week is appointed in the room of the seventh.”*

May Christians never “**religiously observe the Sabbath**”, for “**religion**” is profane and idolatrous. May Christians “**observe the Sabbath**” for Christ’s sake or not at all.

Neither the Old nor the New Testament knows a “**Jewish Sabbath**”. Or rather, the New Testament better than the Old knows a “**Jewish Sabbath**” because it puts the Sabbath the **Jews** kept in **sharpest contrast** to the Sabbath **Jesus** kept. To the criteria of the **Gospel** the **Church’s First Day** Lord’s Day and its observance sort under the category of “**Jewish Sabbath**” for it is **no more** “*than prudential human appointment*” – it is no more than to “**religiously observe the Sabbath**”.

“*All these **classes** of men say ...*” “**Sabbatarians**” are always “*classed*” – and mostly for good reason, unfortunately. And so the **Sabbath** gets “*classed*” – which is unfair to the Sabbath and insulting to the Lord of the Sabbath.

*“There is no clear revelation that it is the mind and will of God, that the **First Day** of the week should be observed as a day to be set apart for religious exercises, in the room of the ancient Sabbath; which there ought to be in order to the observation of it by the Christian church, as a divine institution.”*

We may find in the **New** Testament **primary** evidence of clearest revelation that it is the mind and will of God that the **Seventh Day** should be observed by the Christian church as **Sabbath** as a divine institution. We indeed “*ought not to go upon the tradition of past ages, or upon uncertain and far-fetched inferences from some passages of the history of the New Testament, or upon some obscure and uncertain hints in the apostolic writings*” for either the confirmation of the Sabbath or for its

replacement by the First Day. We might justifiably “**expect a plain institution**” to the contrary. Such expectations are disappointed while we find **many** apostolic writings and certain inferences of the **holy Sabbath** as a divine institution – which we may conclude **God would have given us** if He had designed that the whole Christian church, in all ages, should observe it, as appointed of old as well as by plain and positive institution of the New Testament.

*“So far it is undoubtedly true, that if this be the mind and will of God, he has **not left the matter to human tradition**; but has so revealed his mind about it, in his **Word**, that there is to be found good and substantial evidence that it is his mind; and doubtless, the **revelation** is plain enough for them that have ears to hear; that is, for them that will justly exercise their understandings about what God says to them. No Christian, therefore, should rest till he has satisfactorily discovered the mind of **God** in this matter. If the Christian Sabbath be of **divine** institution, it is doubtless of great importance to religion that it be well kept; and therefore, that every Christian be well acquainted with the institution.”*

*Men might more readily take it only upon trust, and keep the **First Day** of the week because their parents taught them so, or because they see others do it. Likewise, if men take it only upon trust, and keep the **Sabbath Day** because their parents taught them so, or because they see others do it, they will never be likely to keep it so conscientiously and strictly, as if they had been convinced by seeing for themselves, that there are good grounds in the Word of God for their practice. Unless they do see thus for themselves, whenever they are negligent in sanctifying the Sabbath, or are guilty of profaning it, their consciences will not have that advantage to smite them for it, as otherwise they would. And those who have a sincere desire to obey God in all things, will keep the Sabbath more carefully and more cheerfully, if they have seen and been convinced that therein they do what is according to the will and command of God, and what is acceptable to him; and will also have a great deal more comfort in the reflection upon their having carefully and painfully kept the Sabbath.*

*Therefore, I design now, by the help of God, to show, that it is sufficiently revealed in the Scriptures, to be the mind and will of God, that the **Sabbath** should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week, as **the only** Sabbath, to be devoted to **Christian** exercises of worship. In order to this, I shall here **premise**, that the mind and will of God, concerning any duty to be performed by us, may be **sufficiently revealed in his word, with or** without a particular precept in so many express terms, enjoining it. **Then, being supported** by particular precept in so many express terms, **enjoining** it, the mind and*

will of God concerning **our Christian duty concerning the Sabbath** to be performed by us, **is** sufficiently revealed in his word.

The human understanding is the ear to which the word of God is spoken; and if it be **so spoken**, that that ear may plainly hear it, it is enough. "**For God concerning the Seventh day thus spake**", says the Scriptures. (Hb.4:4) "**For He that sat upon the throne said**, Behold, I make all things new". (Rev.21:5) And "God in these last days, in the Son", "thus", "to us", "spoke", **revealing His sovereignty in Jesus Christ**.

God is sovereign as to the manner of speaking his mind "concerning the Seventh Day", whether he will speak it **in express terms**, or whether he will speak it by saying **several other things** which may imply it, and from which we may, by comparing them together, **plainly** perceive it. **If the mind of God be but revealed**, if there be but sufficient means for the communication of his mind to our minds, that is sufficient. Whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes; or whether we see the thing that he would signify to us by the eye of reason and understanding – **if the mind of God be but revealed**, that is sufficient; "**by faith**" we perceive it!

Who can positively say, that if it had been the mind of God, that we should keep **the Sabbath in the New Testament dispensation**, he would have commanded it in express terms, as He **already** did the observation of the **very** seventh day of old? Indeed, if God had so made our faculties, that we were **not** capable of receiving a revelation of his mind in any other way; **then** there would have been some reason to say so. But God has given us such understandings, as we are capable of receiving a revelation, when made in another manner than in express terms. That other manner indeed is God's revelation through **act** – through promise and fulfilment, through prophecy and realisation – **in Christ Jesus** who is the fulfilment and realisation of all Old Testament Promise and Prophecy! And if God deals with us agreeably to our natures as He does to our **souls** in **saving** us through Jesus Christ, and **that**, in a way suitable to our fallen and weak capacities, **it is enough**. If God discovers his mind in any way whatsoever, **provided** it be according to His everlasting **Covenant of Grace**, we are obliged to obedience; and God may expect our notice and observance of his revelation, in the same manner as if he had revealed it in express terms. Now God dealt with us in exactly that way in Jesus Christ in raising Him from the dead "in Sabbath's-time", "according to the Scriptures the third day" of "Yahweh's Salvation / Passover" – **the day in which God accomplished all His works He had finished in Jesus Christ!**

I shall speak upon this subject under these two general propositions.

One. It is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that **The Seventh Day** of the week should be devoted to a **Sabbath's rest**, and to **Christian worship**, throughout all ages and nations. A **Sabbath's rest** means **that** day's rest because of the Salvation Christ wrought "for us", "the People of God", **IN THAT DAY**.

Two. It is sufficiently clear, that under the gospel-dispensation, this day is "**the Seventh Day concerning which God spoke**", and Christ spoke, when He, "Lord of the Sabbath", said, "the third day I finish" it being the Lord's Day of victory!

Proposition I. It is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that **this** day of the week, "**the Seventh Day**", should be devoted to rest, and to Christian worship, throughout all ages and nations; and not only among the ancient Israelites, till Christ came, but even and **especially** in these **Gospel** times, and among all nations professing **Christianity**. **For only in Gospel-times arrived the promised Day God by His Word "appointed" and "finished on"**.

"**The state of mankind in this world is such**, that we are called to **concern ourselves in secular business and affairs**, which will necessarily, **in a considerable degree**, take up the thoughts and engage the attention of the mind. However some particular persons may be in circumstances more free and disengaged; yet the **state of mankind is such**, that the bulk of them, in all ages and nations, are called ordinarily to **exercise their thoughts about secular affairs**, and to follow worldly business, which, in its own nature, is **remote** from the solemn duties of religion."

From the consideration of **such** nature and state of mankind in this world, **God**, would **not** expect of human reason to take it only upon trust. **God**, from the consideration of **such** nature and state of mankind in this world, would **not** allow men to be convinced by seeing for themselves, that there are good grounds for their practice. **God**, rather, provided "men" with the **Scriptures**, as "**revelation**" of His "**mind and will**".

From the consideration of the nature and state of mankind in this world **in Edwards' day** – in the age of "reason" and "natural religion" – it **might** have been most consonant to human reason, that certain fixed parts of time – provided those "**parts**" are the First Day of the week, it being "**most meet and suitable**" – should be set apart, to be spent by the church wholly in religious exercises, and in the duties of divine worship. It might **then** have been a duty incumbent on all mankind, to worship and serve God on the First Day of the week. But from the consideration of the nature and state of mankind in this world **in the twenty first century**, it is most consonant to human reason that **NO TIME AT ALL**, not even **one day of the week**, should be set apart, should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, to be spent by the church wholly or even in part – in religious exercises, and in the duties of divine worship. It is **least**

consonant and most unsuitable to human reason that any time should be devoted to God in rest. How inconsonant then to human reason that The Seventh Day of the week should be devoted to God in rest! So, if one cannot rely on the Scriptures for revelation on this matter, one must plod in darkness – be the thoughts and attention of the mind ever so concerned in the solemn duties of religion. If the mind of God be but revealed, if there be but sufficient means of His mercies for the communication of his mind to our minds, that is sufficient; whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes. **To hear and see God’s Word in the very life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – that is sufficient!**

“His service should be our great business” – which is a most noble thought and solemn duty. “It becomes us to worship him with the greatest devotion and engagedness of mind; and therefore to put ourselves on the Sabbath Day in such circumstances, as will most contribute to render our minds entirely devoted to this work, without being diverted or interrupted by other things.” God “appointed” a day for just such a “proper” use. In the Gospels Jesus through Sabbath by Sabbath’s word and act and finally through SABBATH’S ACT AND WORD OF RESURRECTION confirmed : God’s “appointed” day! It was the Sabbath Day thus “properly” “spoken of” by God and once for all in Jesus Christ confirmed. It was not the First Day of the week. It was not the First Day of the week because the First day of the week was never “properly” destined unto appointment and confirmation and never in event occurred to “proper” appointment and confirmation of the Word of God.

“If (God) had designed that the whole Christian church, in all ages, should observe another day of the week for a holy Sabbath than that which was appointed of old by plain and positive institution”, He would have been a very strange God. “Of old” He would have “designed” and “appointed” “the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD thy God” – but in Jesus Christ He would instead have abolished the Sabbath of the LORD thy God and would have founded another in its place that never was prepared for holy use and service like He prepared The Seventh Day.

Edwards even says God “designed that the whole Christian church, in all ages, should observe another day of the week for a holy Sabbath”, indicating the Church of all ages is one, and the same, as its LORD and Saviour is One and “The Same, yesterday, today and for ever”. Yet this LORD and Saviour “designed ... another day of the week for a holy Sabbath, than that which” HE “appointed of old by plain and positive institution” – which is utterly inconsistent with the nature and character of THIS LORD and Saviour of the Church, with His eternal

design, and with the nature and constitution of “the whole Christian church, in all ages”.

It is therefore most meet and suitable that God “set apart” the Sabbath Day upon which men should be required to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may be the more freely and entirely engaged in spiritual exercises, in the duties of the Faith, and in the immediate Worship of God; and that their minds being disengaged from common concerns, their devotion may not be mixed with them. “No Christian, therefor, should rest till he has satisfactorily discovered the mind of God in this matter. If the Christian Sabbath be of divine institution, it is doubtless of great importance to Faith that it be well kept; and therefore, that every Christian be well acquainted with the institution” that it be established in Christ once for all!

Of divine institution the Seventh Day Sabbath is, doubtless, seeing all that God has promised and has done in Jesus Christ! “If the mind of God be but revealed” – if men would take it only upon trust – if men were but convinced by seeing with the eye of faith – if men would but understand with the ear to which the Living Word of God is spoken, that there are good grounds in the Word of God for it and but kept the Sabbath Day because of what God had begun and ended in Christ!

“God is sovereign as to the manner of speaking his mind”, and as He in the Old Testament through Prophet, Psalm and Law “discovered his mind”, He in the Gospel “discovered his mind” no differently, but speaks His very same Word, “in the Son”. From which we may, by comparing Old and New together, plainly perceive that God involved “the Seventh Day”. He, “concerning” no other day, “thus”, “spoke”! “Thus” means, “in the Son ... in these last days” (“as in former days”). “Thus” means, in “ending ... in the Son” all his works that God had done”! “Spoke” means, working, acting and “speaking” “in the Son”!

It therefore is suitable that The Sabbath Day “should be fixed and settled, that the church may agree therein. and that (it) should be the same for all, that men may not interrupt (judge and persecute) one another; but may rather assist one another by mutual example: for example has a great influence in such cases. If there be a time set apart for public rejoicing, and there be a general manifestation of joy, the general example seems to inspire men with a spirit of joy: one kindles another. So, if it be a time of mourning, and there be general appearances and manifestations of sorrow, it naturally affects the mind, it disposes it to depression, it casts a gloom upon it, and does as it were dull and deaden the spirits.”

For Christians the Lord’s Day is of “certain time”, set apart as holy, for special devotion, and solemn worship – a general example tending to render the spirit serious and solemn. Whether we hear so many

express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes; or whether we see the thing that God would signify to us by the eye of reason and understanding, who can positively say that if it had been the mind of God that we should keep **the Sabbath**, He would NOT? God **nevertheless** commanded it **in express terms**, as he did the observance of old of **“the Seventh Day of the week”**.

Who would dare to say that God **changed**? That He changed his Will and Mind? That He **“made”** not **“this day for which let us be glad”**, but abrogated it and in its stead brought in another as if his Word were fickle? If God had so made our faculties, that we were not capable of receiving a revelation of his mind **in express terms**; then there would have been some reason to say so. If God had so made our faculties, that we were not capable of receiving a revelation of his mind **in Divine Promise, Prophecy and Paradigm**; then there would have been some reason to say so. If God had so made our faculties, that we were not capable of receiving a revelation of his mind **through the fulfilment and making true of His very “Spoken” Word in his Living Word – then** there would have been some reason to say so. **“God is sovereign as to the manner of speaking his mind, whether he will speak it in express terms, or whether he will speak it by saying several other things which may imply it, and from which we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive it.”** **“That ear”** that thus hears, will **“plainly perceive”** how **“plainly”** God in every which way in the Scriptures **“discovers” the Seventh Day Sabbath** to **“our faculties”**. **God in His mercy** “to us-ward” had so made our faculties, that we are indeed made capable of receiving a revelation of his mind and of having no doubt about it! **Mercy and God’s Word** supply **“sufficient means”**. (By “Mercy” I mean Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit Who acquaints the sinner with Him – **“God”** Who **“deals with us agreeably”**, **“God”** Who **“has given us understanding”**!) **“God may expect our notice and observation of his revelation, in the same manner as if he had revealed it in express terms”**, says **Edwards**.

Therefore, I design now, by the help of God, to show, that it is sufficiently revealed in the Scriptures, to be the mind and will of God, that the **“Seventh”** Day of the week should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week, being The Sabbath, to be devoted to religious exercises. In order to this, I shall here premise, that the mind and will of God, concerning any duty to be performed by us, is in fact sufficiently **revealed in his word**, and when with a particular **precept** in so many express terms, **enjoining** it, is in fact **doubly sure** – like the Promise of God confirmed by Oath of God (Hb.6:13).

So far it is undoubtedly true, that if this be the mind and will of God that the **“Seventh”** Day of the week should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week, being The Sabbath, He has

not left the matter to human tradition; but has so revealed his mind about it, **in his Word**, that there is to be found good and substantial evidence that it **is** his mind: and doubtless, the revelation is plain enough for them that have ears to hear; that is, for them that will justly exercise their understandings about what God says to them.

It comes down to saying that **“if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God”**, Jn.7:17. It is a hard and tough word. Obedience to it for certain will bring upon the believer despising by his fellows – if he takes it to apply to believing and keeping of the Sabbath, that is – if he takes it to apply to believing and following **Jesus** LORD of the Sabbath!

Edwards directs the challenge, **“Who can positively say, that if it had been the mind of God, that we should keep the first day of the week, he would have commanded it in express terms, as he did the observation of the seventh day of old?”**

Why could not anyone **positively** say, that if it **had** been the mind of God that we should keep the **first** day of the week, he **would** have commanded it in **express terms**, **as** he did the observance of the seventh day of old? **Would that not be just natural, just reasonable?** Edwards’ might have been a reasonable challenge, had it not been that **no one** can positively **see**, that it **ever** had been the mind of God, that we should keep the first day of the week! It is reasonably just to expect God would have commanded keeping of the first day of the week in **express terms**.

Where in God’s revelations of Mercy is the Church **prepared** for the First Day of the week as the Church **is** prepared for **“the seventh day of old”** and the coming God? Nowhere! But the believer who studies the Promises, the Prophecies, the Paradigms, the Psalms and the Law of God **MUST positively** say, that if it had been the mind of God that we should keep **the first day of the week**, He would **clearly** have expressed His mind concerning it as He **clearly** of old **“concerning the seventh day”**, did.

It finally is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that **The Sabbath** should be devoted to rest, and to worship, **throughout all ages and nations**; and not only among the ancient Israelites, till Christ came, but even **in these Gospel times**, and among **all nations professing Christianity**.

It **not only** is sufficiently clear, that this **should** be so; it **also** is sufficiently clear that in these Gospel times, The Seventh Day Sabbath **was in fact** devoted to rest, and to worship, throughout **at least the first** century of Christian history; and not only among the Israelites, but among **all** nations professing Christianity.

Without doubt, God **preferred** the Sabbath Day and indeed **elected** and **predestined** it for His Eternal Purpose in Jesus Christ. God **elected** and **predestined** the Seventh Day **for His own glory**, **as** He elected and predestined his chosen People for His own glory. It might have been said also of the **First** Day of the week that God elected and predestined it for His own glory **IF** the **same** might be said of **any or all of the other six days** of the week. It shows how particular God is in that He does **not** of **any but** “concerning the **Seventh Day** thus spoke”. God through His Word **created** the Sabbath *fitter* for His purpose than **any other day He created**. “Without doubt, one proportion of time is better and fitter than another for this purpose”, says Edwards, and **therefore** “the Sabbath was made” – “made” by God – LORD of the Sabbath – “for this purpose”. “Because Jesus had given them rest He would not speak of another day after that. There therefore remains a keeping of the Sabbath for the People of God!”, Hb.4:8-9.

Therefore, there can be no difficulty in allowing, that **certainly The Seventh Day Sabbath of the week**, and not of any arbitrary length of time, *as we exactly find it discovered in Holy Writ, is really fittest and best – considering the end for which it “was made” and the condition, circumstances, and necessary affairs of men in connection with salvation and worship*. Considering then what the state of man is, taking one age and nation with another, The Seventh Day Sabbath may not be the more convenient but certainly the only suitable, being that which **God** may know and exactly determine, though **we, by reason of the scantiness of our understandings, cannot**.

“It is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that God’s working six days, and resting the seventh, and blessing and hallowing it, was to be of general use in determining this matter, and that it was written, that the practice of mankind in general might some way or other be regulated by it. What could be the meaning of God’s resting the seventh day, and hallowing and blessing it, which he did, before the giving of the fourth commandment, unless he hallowed and blessed it with respect to mankind? For he did not bless and sanctify it with respect to himself, or that he within himself might observe it: as that is most absurd. And it is unreasonable to suppose that he hallowed it only with respect to the Jews, a particular nation, which rose up above two thousand years after.” (Emphasis CGE)

What Edwards says here in every direction confirms the **Seventh Day** for being God’s Sabbath Day. Where he says, “For (God) did not bless and sanctify it **with respect to himself, or that he within himself might observe it: as that is most absurd**”, Edwards contradicts God’s very purpose with and for the Sabbath Day: “What could be the meaning of God’s resting the seventh day, and hallowing and blessing it ...

before the giving of the fourth commandment, unless he hallowed and blessed it with respect to mankind? For God did not bless and sanctify it with respect to himself only, and He not only within himself observed the Sabbath Day. But God blessed and sanctified the Seventh Day with a view to a Man, and in Him, with a view TO A UNION with “man”. Exactly therein that “the Sabbath was made for man” is implied that it was made for THIS MAN, Jesus who came to save “man”. We should rather reverse our statement, that exactly therein that the Sabbath was made for THIS MAN, Jesus, who came to save “man”, is implied that “the Sabbath was made for man”. And so God in fact in this order worked out His purpose with and in the Man Jesus of Nazareth – in every respect “according to” what the “Scriptures” and the Sabbath foreshadowed “with respect to himself”! “With respect to mankind” implies the coming of God in Christ to save “man” and therefore the phrase “for man” as thoroughly implies “with respect to himself” as it implies “with respect to mankind”! The Sabbath was made “for man” in that sense and in that sense only! Then Christ did not find it “most absurd” “that he within himself might observe” the Sabbath.

Then neither did God, for here is **HOW, God**, in omnipotence **within himself observed** the Sabbath; **HOW, He**, with respect to **himself blessed it and sanctified it**: “The Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the **LORD thy God**: ... For the **LORD** rested the Seventh Day: **WHEREFOR the LORD** blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it ... for on the Seventh Day **God** ended his work He had prepared ... because that in it **He** had rested from all His work which God created and made. ... Remember ... that **the LORD thy God** saved thee from (the land of Egypt) **through a mighty hand and a stretched out arm: THEREFORE ... THAT YE MAY KNOW ... WHAT IS THE EXCELLING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO US-WARD WHO BELIEVE, WHAT, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER IS THAT WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD AND SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN HEAVENLY SPHERES FAR ABOVE PRINCIPALITY AND POWER AND MIGHT AND DOMINION AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED NOT ONLY IN THIS WORLD BUT ALSO IN THAT WHICH IS TO COME HAVING PUT ALL THINGS UNDER HIS FEET AND HAVING GIVEN HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY: THE FULNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL!” **This**, makes of the Seventh Day, the Sabbath of the LORD thy God’s blessing and sanctifying “with respect to himself”. It makes of God’s instituting and constituting of the Seventh Day, an observing, a “working” of it “within himself”. In fact, not before **in Christ** incarnate,**

and **in Christ** incarnate in **resurrection** from the dead, was God's recognition of the Seventh Day Sabbath "with respect to himself" and "within himself" "**finished**"!

What could be the meaning of God's resting the seventh day, and hallowing and blessing it, which he did, before the giving of the fourth commandment, unless he hallowed and blessed it **with respect to mankind IN JESUS CHRIST**? For he did not **BUT IN CHRIST** bless and sanctify it with respect to himself, that he within himself might observe it: as that is most **CERTAIN and FITTING**. There is nothing "that is most absurd" in God's "observing" of the Sabbath "with respect to Himself" or "within Himself". God's observing of the Sabbath with respect to Himself is as his creating of it and with respect to himself as his communing with man in Jesus Christ – a proleptic realisation of God incarnate. THERE IS NO SABBATH BUT GOD'S OBSERVING OF IT WITH RESPECT TO HIMSELF! Christians have made the Sabbath equal with man's shallow **keeping** of it, tapped it of its **divine** mystery, and so find it "absurd" that God may observe the Sabbath Day.

When Jesus, "LORD of the Sabbath" says, "the Sabbath was made for man", **He answers on his own behalf** those who oppose **Him** and **His** Kingly Rule as LORD of the Sabbath. The "Sabbath"-controversy **concerned** Jesus Himself, was "with respect to Himself" and concerned what He "within Himself" **was** and **is** and for ever will **be**: "**Son of man – exalted and divine heavenly Being – Lord of the Sabbath**" "with respect to Himself" and "within Himself". **First** "with respect to Himself" and "within Himself"; and necessarily only **then**, "for **man**" – and for "mankind in general" only as far as represented by the **Church! Not absolutely** for "mankind in general", but "for man" as **Christ's** Body the Church ... "the Sabbath remains for the **People of God**"! Even man's observing of the Sabbath is acceptable with respect to God himself or is hollow holidaying.

Now imagine the "**Lord** of the Sabbath" **not** being involved and **not** being concerned in his own Sabbath Day, **not** being concerned in its observance "with respect to Himself" or His People's keeping of it! Imagine the People of God being obtruded a day that in no way or time what so ever had ever been associated with Jesus' Kingly office of LORD as had been the Seventh Day of the week, accumulating upon that day all the honours of God's "Holy (Day)". Imagine it, and see what the Christian Church has done to the Sabbath of the LORD thy God!

An example of the dust of tradition the Sabbath gets buried under is revealed in the following: "As a certain frequency of the returns of these times may be more suitable than any other, so one length or continuance of the times themselves may be fitter than another, to answer the purposes of such times. If such times, when they come, were to last

but an hour, it would not well answer the end; for then worldly things would crowd too nearly upon sacred exercises, and there would not be that opportunity to get the mind so thoroughly free and disengaged from other things, as there would be if the times were longer. Being so short, sacred and profane things would be as it were mixed together. Therefore, a certain distance between these times, and a certain continuance of them when they come, is more proper than others; which God knows and is able to determine, though perhaps we cannot."

Edwards' comparison is taken to the extreme: "but an hour"! He is compelled to also mention "times too far asunder" and "time proportion(s) ... more suitable to the state of mankind" that were actually employed by infidels (like ten days during the French revolution). On such reasoning one cannot but surrender: "I think human reason is sufficient to discover ...". Receiving no attention in or from Scripture these "considerations" simply are superfluous. They have nothing to do with the validity or not of either the First Day or the Seventh Day. Notice clearly, *the Fourth Commandment does not fix the "proportion" of "time" of worship as if **one seventh** of one's hours or one seventh of one's days – it fixes the **DAY** of worship! Therefore, a **certain distance** between days, and a **certain continuance** of them when they come, is more proper than **any** – it is the **week** – which God knows and is able to determine, though **we, certainly**, cannot but by the revelation of God's Word in the Scriptures.*

"It is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that **God's** working six days, and resting the seventh, and blessing and hallowing it, was to be of general use in determining this matter, and that it was written, that the practice of mankind in general might some way or other be regulated by it." "It is enough"!

Arguments such as about "time proportions" are of strategic importance to the generals of war who ran out of ammunition. It creates **impression** of muscle – meanwhile it's all flabbiness. It **distracts attention** from the relevant issue. The instance under consideration illustrates: "Time proportions" have nothing to do with the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. And so there's no *scantiness* but in *understanding* in Edwards' **three extensive Sermons** each introduced with this Scripture-passage. **Why?** Because "considering the condition, circumstances, and necessary affairs of men ... considering what the state of man is" the Seventh Day Sabbath is not "suitable" "for man". But for God it is; and for God's People it also is the only "suitable" Day of Worship.

The *scantiness of our understanding of the end for which the Sabbath* was made... there's the real problem! Had the Church been but taught the Sabbath as it had been taught the Sunday – that on it this most wonderful thing happened: **Jesus Christ who rose from the dead** ...!

“So much therefore must be intended by God’s resting the seventh day, and blessing and hallowing it, that it was his mind, that mankind should, after his example, work six days, and then rest, and hallow or sanctify the next following; and that they should sanctify every seventh day ...”

“So much therefore must be intended” – NOT “... that men ... should sanctify one day in seven.” “One day in seven” may be “which is the thing we are endeavouring to prove”, but it is NOT the thing “that was his – God’s – mind”! What more is this than an attempt to disprove “God’s example” of “resting the seventh day”! In theory it may be any “one day in seven” as long as in practice it is the First Day of the week. By sophistry it is allowed to be any day but certainly NOT the Seventh! Then it is called “Christian” and “free”! Then we have the audacity to declare: “in this matter ... the mind of God is clearly revealed” – and “clearly revealed”, “in the fourth commandment”!

Here we have form-criticism without realising it. Just as for form-criticism the Church has made of the man Jesus of Nazareth the Christ, of the crucified the Resurrected from the dead, so for Sunday argumentation, there is no reality to the seven days of creation. The Lord’s Day is what the Church has made of a day that had no real first instance. The Church chose the day best for its ideology, and it decided upon the day venerated for its mythological prowess – the Day of the Sun. Since then the Church’s Day of Worship no longer is any after any six days or the Seventh Day of the “Jewish” week, but, the day light overcame darkness.

“The will of God is there (in the fourth commandment) revealed, not only that the Israelitish nation, but that all nations, should keep every seventh day holy; or, which is the same thing, one day after every sixth. This command, as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation, at least, as to the substance of it, as is intimated by its being engraven on the tables of stone. Nor is it to be thought that Christ ever abolished any command of the ten; but that there is the complete number ten yet, and will be to the end of the world.”

How unnecessary that God should have gone to all the trouble Edwards stipulates here if man *should* for “every seventh day keep holy” any day! This *clearly* is one of those grotesquely inflated caricatures of the Sabbath. From its nonsensical nature results its repetition, restructuring and rephrasing, only to avoid the unambiguous conclusion of the Seventh Day of the week’s perpetual nature and obligation as being and for being “the Sabbath of the LORD thy God”.

“Man should keep holy every seventh day; or, which is the same thing, one day after every sixth.” That presupposes counting and keeping from “God’s resting the seventh day” when He created. In New Testament terms – from the primary perspective – that presupposes

counting and keeping from “God’s resting the seventh day” when He raised Christ from the dead.

To “keep” does not only mean to regard as enshrined in glory. It means to continue, to maintain and to remember. Now if “kept” from “God’s resting the seventh day” – and the nature of God as such as being faultless and eternally unchanging and this is “his mind and will”, “his mind and will” have in view the Seventh Day of the week for being and to be his Day of Rest – “Sabbath”!

A Day Belonging to the “Week”

“The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a Sabbath”, Edwards alleges, thereby, firstly, contradicting and denying the very crux of his own and greater argument, that “the mind and will of God ... may be sufficiently revealed in his word, without a particular precept in so many express terms, enjoining it ... whether he will speak it in express terms, or whether he will speak it by saying several other things which may imply it, and from which we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive it ... whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes ... we see the thing that he would signify to us, by the eye of reason and understanding”. The words of the Fourth Commandment DO determine which day OF THE WEEK is intended and implied. Reason and understanding make us see the thing signified to us. To deny it is to deny the mind and will of God are sufficiently revealed in his Word.

In the second place Edwards himself several times and emphatically presupposes that the weekly cycle of creation determines the specific Day indicated in the Fourth Commandment, namely “The Seventh Day” of the WEEK: “with respect to the First Day of the week, as it was among the Jews, with respect to the seventh”; “that it be done on such a particular day of the week, as if no other day would do so well as that, or were so proper and fit a time for such a work”; “he gives the preference to one day of the week, before any other, for the performance of a certain great duty of Christianity”; “the First Day of the week should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week”; “we may conclude God would have given us, if he had designed that the whole Christian church, in all ages, should observe another day of the week for a holy Sabbath, than that which was appointed of old by plain and positive institution”; “... if we should keep the first day of the week, he would have commanded it in express terms, as he did the observation of the seventh day of old”; “... one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations”; “one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations; and not only among the ancient

Israelites, till Christ came, but **even** in these **gospel** times, **and** among all nations professing **Christianity**".

These examples of Edwards' own presupposition that the "The Seventh Day" in the Fourth Commandment implies that it is "The Seventh Day **OF THE WEEK**", should suffice. It might be a good moment here to recall Edwards' words, "If it should be allowed that there is no morality belonging to the command, and that the duty required is founded merely on arbitrary institution, it cannot therefore be certainly concluded that the command is not perpetual." If the **literal aspect** of the Commandment, "**The Seventh Day**", be regarded for what Edwards calls "merely arbitrary institution", and "it be allowed that there is no morality belonging to it" per se, **even then**, it "cannot be certainly concluded that the command is not perpetual". But this we admit hypothetically and not as a necessary implication. The **impossibility** to conclude **temporality** from any aspect of this Commandment just further guarantees "the perpetuity of the Sabbath" and that there is *nothing which concludes that this positive precept given before the times of the gospel cannot yet continue in force.* "The thing in general", the "merely arbitrary institution", that the Commandment fixes **The Seventh Day OF THE WEEK** and sets **IT** apart to be devoted to religious exercises, is founded in the fitness of the thing that arises from the nature of it being **determined, revealed and commanded by God**. It arises **NOT** "from the nature and universal state of **mankind**", **OR**, "from the nature of the thing in **itself**".

*Who, therefore, can positively say, that if it had been the mind of God, that we should keep the **first** day of the week, he would **NOT** have commanded it in express terms, as he did the observation of the seventh day of old? Indeed, if God had so made our faculties, that we were **IN FACT** capable of receiving a revelation of his mind in any other way, **then** there would have been some reason to say so. But God has given us such understandings, as **REQUIRE** a revelation by the Word of God in the **Scriptures**. And if God **thus** deals with us agreeably to our natures, and in a way **thus** suitable to our capacities, it is enough – **for it is of grace!** If God discovers his mind in any way whatsoever, provided it be according to our **WEAK** faculties that are **totally dependent** on God's mercies, we are obliged to obedience; and God may expect our notice and observance of his revelation, in the same manner as if he had revealed it in express terms. We adhere to God's express terms in Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, and to "the Seventh Day concerning (which) He spoke" His Mind and Will through and in Jesus Christ! That Seventh Day, "concerning which God spoke", **belongs to God's creation and God's time**, the time of man He made his own in condescending love in Jesus Christ. We know it is the Seventh Day **of the week**. Why should we*

deny it? Not to clash with Tradition and Rome – for no other reason!

*"The words (of the fourth command) no way determine **where those six days shall begin, and so where the rest or Sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, i. e. where to begin and end it; but that is supposed to be determined otherwise.**"*

Now let's have a look at that Commandment as it reads in Exodus 20 and in Deuteronomy 5. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the **Seventh** Day the Sabbath of the LORD thy God thou shalt not work ... for in six days **the LORD made heaven and earth**, the sea, and all that in them is, **and rested the Seventh Day** (He made): wherefor the LORD blessed the **Sabbath** Day, and hallowed it."

It cannot be *perceived* or *expressed* more *plainly* that "the **Sabbath** Day" **being** "the **Seventh** Day" being "**The Seventh Day**" **is** the seventh day **of God's doing** in finishing and resting, hallowing and blessing **AT AND SINCE CREATION**.

"Keep the Sabbath Day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God commanded thee: Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work. But the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD thy God thou shalt not do any work ... and shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt. But the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty Hand and by a stretched out Arm. THEREFORE the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day."

More *plainly*, once again, it cannot be *perceived* or *expressed* that the Seventh Day Sabbath by belonging to the LORD thy God **is what it is**, and THEREFORE **is** The Seventh Day **of God's doing** in bringing out from bondage and sin **AT AND SINCE the Exodus**. *There is this absolute direction in the fourth command **how** to reckon the time, i. e. where to begin and end the time; it is supposed to be determined **no way otherwise**.* It implies the **week** as an institution of time that is **God's**, and, defined according to Edwards' norms, is "*moral*" in every respect, as for being "*revealed in his word without a particular precept in so many express terms enjoining it*", and as for being that "*which we by comparing it with several other things that may imply it, may plainly perceive*".

"The Jews did not know, by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest; this was determined by another precept. The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; but it does not appoint any. It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of labour, which particular day God either had or should appoint. ..."

The Jews did not know where to begin their six days **but** by the fourth command. On which particular day to rest they only knew by the fourth command. The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; **and** it in fact appoints it. It requires us to rest and keep holy this, The Seventh Day, which particular day **God** rested and kept holy.

The particular day was determined for that nation in another place, viz. in Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 26. "And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake, today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And Moses said, Eat that today; for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." This is the first place where we have any mention made of the Sabbath, from the first Sabbath on which God rested."

So the People of God through unbelief entered not into God's rest and He swore the disobedient won't. But since Jesus had given them rest from the first Sabbath on which God rested, many do enter, and therefore there remains for the People of God a keeping of His Sabbath Day.

"It seems that the Israelites, in the time of their bondage in Egypt, had lost the true reckoning of time by the days of the week, **reckoning from the first day of the creation**. They were slaves, and in cruel bondage, and had in a great measure forgotten the true religion: for we are told, that they served the gods of Egypt. And it is not to be supposed, that the Egyptians would suffer their slaves to rest from their work every seventh day. Now, they having remained in bondage for so long a time, had probably lost the weekly reckoning; therefore, when God had brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness, **he made known to them the Sabbath**, (He made known to them The Seventh Day of the week) on the occasion and in the manner recorded in the text just now quoted. Hence, we read in Nehemiah, that when God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, &c. he made known unto them his holy Sabbath; Neh. ix. 14. "And madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath." To the same effect, we read in Ezek. xx. 10, 12. "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover also, I gave them my Sabbaths."

But they never would have known where the particular day would have fallen **by the fourth command**. ...".

In fact not. By the sure mercies of God "**he made known to them the Sabbath**". **1**, By the sure mercies of the **Bread of Life from heaven** God made known to his chosen people **HIS** Sabbath Day, **The Seventh Day** of and since creation. And God also, **2**, **before** He referred **HIS**

Sabbath Day to Law, **through grace of Passover-redemption** "*proved*", "*determined*" and "*appointed*" the Seventh Day **of and since** creation **as and for being** His Holy Sabbath Day **ever since**.

*Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, referred to their Passover-Sabbath. **Verily thus** the day was determined and appointed by Law. The precept in the fourth command is to be taken generally of such a seventh day as **God** appointed. And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church; therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day (**The Seventh Day of the week**).*

*"But this does not prove", says Edwards, "that the same words refer to **another** appointed seventh day, now in the Christian church."* No of course not! But Edwards nevertheless decides, "*The words of the fourth command may oblige the church under **different dispensations** to observe different appointed seventh days, as well as the fifth command may oblige different persons to honour different fathers and mothers.*"

Incidentally, the Fifth Commandment does not oblige persons to **dishonour** their own parents, while Edwards' argument implies the **dishonouring** of the creation- and Passover-Seventh Day. It implies the stripping of the Seventh Day of and since creation and of and since Passover-redemption of all its honour and the surrendering of its honour to the First Day of the week in that now under the *dispensation* of the Gospel the fourth command **according to Edwards** obliges the church to observe a "*different ... day*". Only Edwards would know how "*the seventh day*" of this Commandment could be "*appointed different seventh days*".

"The precept in the fourth command is to be taken generally of such a seventh day as God should appoint, or had appointed. And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church; therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day. ..." Let us observe the Gospel-meaning these words of Edwards could have had but that he certainly intended it not. It speaks of "**such a seventh day as God should appoint, or had appointed**" in Jesus Christ according to His eternal Covenant of Grace. "**And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church; therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day**" – "concerning (which) God spoke". Says the preacher of the Sermon to the Hebrews, "For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them. Only the word of it did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. ... Seeing therefore it remains – they to whom it was first preached not having entered in because of unbelief – that some must enter into God's rest."

“The Christian Sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish Sabbath; because it is kept after six days of labour as well as that; it is the seventh, reckoning from the beginning of our first working-day, as well as that was the seventh from the beginning of their first working day. All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God’s rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that. It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.”

“All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God’s rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that.” Why would they now begin **after** the day **after the Seventh Day**? Why would they no longer, **now** especially, begin the day after the Seventh Day – with the First Day **of the week** – **as** “formerly”? **And: WHY all the difference?** Here is Edwards’ explanation: “It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.”

Then why would Edwards insist on Sunday to be the First Day of the week? We know of course, because he believes that Christ rose from the dead on Sunday. But believing that means that the Sabbath has lost all its former meaning and lustre. And that children henceforth should dishonour their own parents.

It would **not** have been all one as to this argument. By calling Wednesday (the Fourth Day of the week) the First Day of the week, the Church should have kept Wednesday for its Day of Worship and should have honoured Wednesday for being the day of Jesus resurrection – which all is avoiding the issue by kicking up dust ...

“Therefore, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath, there is no change from the fourth command; but the change is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their working days. So that those words of the fourth command, viz. “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;” afford no objection against that which is called the Christian Sabbath: for these words remain in full force. Neither does any just objection arise from the words following, viz. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.” These words are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh,

because God has set us the example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time. What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is because God worked six days and rested the seventh.”

It is not easy to pity such a big man that he must so beg a question.

Let us rather try to make something positive from these words. *Therefore, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath, there is no change from the fourth command; there is **no** change from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of man’s working days or weeks. So that those words of the fourth command, viz. “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;” afford no objection against that which is called the Christian Sabbath; for these words remain in full force. Neither does any just objection arise from the words following, viz. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.” These words are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but “**six days**”, and to “**rest the Seventh Day**”, because God has set us the example in **resting “The Seventh Day”**. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we must work six days but The Seventh Day MUST rest. What is the reason that Christians rest every **Sabbath Day**, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is “**because God six days worked and in The Seventh Day rested**”.*

This is but the beginning of the understanding of this, because God six days **worked salvation** and in The Seventh Day rested **in Jesus Christ in raising Him from the dead** “in Sabbath’s time”, thus “finishing all His works He had created”, “the third day according to the Scriptures” **of Passover-redemption Feast!**

*It is true, these words (of the Fourth Commandment) did carry something further in their meaning, as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of Christ: it was **then** also intended by them, that the **seventh** day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation. But this is no objection to the supposition, that the words, as they relate to us, imported **all** that they did as they related to the **Promises of the Gospel**. For **these very** words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments, are known and allowed to be of **such** import as they relate **to us**, **and** as they related to the Jews, viz. these words, in the preface to the ten commands, “**I am the Lord thy***

God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” – *“These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all to whom the commandments themselves are spoken: for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments.”* But they do ... **now** remain in all the signification which they had, as they respected the Jews, **and much more, because they now remain in all the significance they obtained as they respected Jesus Christ.** For we **both** were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, ... in a mystical sense. – The same may be said of those words which are inserted in the commandments themselves, Deut. v. 15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: **therefore** the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep **The Sabbath Day.**”” “So that all the arguments of those who are against the Christian Sabbath, drawn from the fourth command, which are all their strength, come to nothing.

2. *That the ancient church was commanded to keep a seventh day in commemoration of the work of creation, is an argument for the keeping of a weekly Sabbath in commemoration of the work of redemption, and not any reason against it.*

We read in Scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command are to be taken as of the same force to those who belong to the new creation, with respect to that new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to that. We read, That “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” and the church of old were to commemorate that work. But when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, those that belong to this new heaven and new earth, by a like reason, are to commemorate the creation of their heaven and earth.

The following part of Edwards’ sermon from the sentence, “*We read in Scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command are to be taken as of the same force to those who belong to the new creation, with respect to that new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to that*”, to the words, “*For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his*”), could, and in fact, word for word should be read **as an argument for the Seventh Day of the week Sabbath Day.**

After this section, Edwards is forced to call a spade a spade, “*Now, Christ rested from his works when he rose from the dead, **on the first day of the week.***” His use of the word “*Now*”, is important. With this word Edwards seems to **conditionally admit**, ‘Yes ... but ...’ or, ‘*Indeed everything we have said of course is written with reference to the **Seventh***

*Day of the week, nevertheless the fact that Christ on the **First** Day of the week rose from the dead, **cancels** all bearing these things had had on the Seventh Day of the week and **transfers** it to its First Day!’*

Now I acknowledge the power and authority of Jesus’ resurrection would have elevated the Day of its happening high above other days. But two things prevent me: **First**, God would have **prepared** the **First** Day **for this** as He prepared the Seventh Day **for this**. Seeing God did **not** prepare the First Day, but by way of His “making the Sabbath”, excluded the **Seventh** Day **for this**, for **prophetic promise and fulfilment** (for **proleptic and eschatological purpose**). The Seventh Day **by exigency had to be** the Day of God’s **finishing in victory** in **Jesus Christ** in **resurrection** from the dead! **Second**, Seeing the Seventh Day that was **expected** by the patriarchs and prophets and indeed **promised** by God that **it, would be** the day of His finishing of creation and victory of redemption, seeing the Seventh Day **actually was** the day of His finishing of creation and of His victory of redemption, **seeing this Seventh Day became the very day** in God’s revelation in Jesus Christ **of resurrection** from the dead, **IT, by exigency, IS** the Day of **CHRIST’S LORDSHIP**. The Seventh Day of the week Sabbath is **Day of Christ’s Victory** in resurrection from the dead and therefore for the Church it is **The Day of Worship!** These two things prevent any admission that the honour of God’s “holy day” could be cancelled and transferred to another day. The Law, “coming after”, can only **confirm** what these two words of God, **Promise and Fulfilment, establish**. Said Christ He came “to magnify the Law ... behold in the roll it is written of Me”! In Edwards’ words, “*When he rose from the dead, then he finished his work of redemption, his humiliation was then at an end; he then rested, and was refreshed. When it is said, “There remaineth a rest to the people of God;” in the original, it is, a sabbatism, or the keeping of a Sabbath: and this reason is given for it, “For he that entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his”* ... IN JESUS CHRIST IN RESURRECTION!

This is it! If we falter **here, everything** goes awry. If we follow after the pattern set **by God in the Old** Testament and see “*the mind and will of God*” **come to fruition and its foundation been laid** in the **New** Testament, the great divide between the Sunday-lie and the Sabbath-truth gapes enormously before the eye of faith. That impassable divide consists in the words of Edwards, “*Now, Christ rested from his works when he rose from the dead, **on the first day of the week***”. It would be impossible and unnecessary to repeat what we have so far said **throughout** *The Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace* on precisely this assertion of Sunday protagonists. But we have answered this audacity and have refuted it thoroughly. Of greater benefit it is simply to re-read Edwards’

sermon **while only keeping in mind** that the day of Jesus' finishing God's works in resurrection, from the perspective of patriarchs and prophets, **would be** the Seventh Day, and, from the perspective of the New Testament, **in fact, was, "in Sabbath's time"**. **When He rose from the dead "in Sabbaths time", then He finished his work of redemption;** He **then**, and **thus, finished his work of creation!** His humiliation was **then** at an end; **HE THEN RESTED**, and was "**revived**"!

"**Therefore**" (*ara*), when it is said, "There remaineth a rest to the people of God" in the original, it is, a **sabbatism**, or **A keeping of THE Sabbath**; and **this reason is given for it**, "For **He** – Jesus Christ – **entered into his rest**, for He also as God did from His, ceased from his own works" ... **in resurrection from the dead!** "*The Fourth Command teaches God's resting from the NEW creation; as well as from the old.*"

For we Christians – **AS WERE THE JEWS** – were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, **in a mystical sense**, by the **resurrection of Jesus Christ!** – and this is the reason given for **us**, as Christians, that **we** "for this reason should labour to enter into that (intangible) **rest**" which is Christ (*katapausis*, 4:11) and should keep the (tangible) **Rest Day** (*sabbatismos*, 4:9), "**The Seventh Day** concerning (which) God thus spoke" (4:4) "in the Son" (1:2). "*Here is an evident reference to God's blessing and hallowing the day of his rest (: "The Seventh Day concerning (which) He spoke") from creation to be a Sabbath, and (to God's) appointing a Sabbath of rest in imitation of Him!*" "*So that all the arguments of those who are against the Christian Sabbath, ... come to nothing*" – even these very arguments Edwards' own!

Why would God mention the fact that He "**on the Seventh Day** rested"? Why has He "**hallowed the Seventh Day**"? Would God have said "the Seventh Day", would He have "done on the Seventh Day", were the Sabbath as to its Seventh-Day-ness of no "*substance*" and were it as to its Seventh-Day-ness to "*come to nothing*"? **Edwards** says, "*This command*", "*as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation ... as is intimated by its being engraven on the tables of stone. Nor is it to be thought that Christ ever abolished any command of the ten; but that there is the complete number ten yet, and will be to the end of the world.*" It seems God went to great lengths as to impress the literal, full and everlasting meaning of **all and every word** He took the trouble to engrave in stone! He took the trouble to engrave in stone "*the complete number ten*" as He did the "*complete*", "*fourth command*" – **yet**, as for **these** words and their meaning, "**The Seventh Day**", God took the trouble to ensure that they have no "*substance*", nor "*intimate*" his "*mind and will*"? Isn't it rather inconsistent that the whole Law should be preserved so perfectly even "*to the end of the world*", yet the Fourth –

and only in that it states "The Seventh Day" – should be **dissected** and that portion of it be **discarded**? Isn't it unimaginably strange that this **discarding and abolishing** of the **Seventh** Day that brings in the fullness of the temporary cycle of days, that exactly when one would think that "**the fullness of time**" **should come to its right** in **Christ**, it isn't confirmed but rejected? Isn't it unacceptably paradoxical that to **this phrase** of the Fourth Commandment: "**The Seventh Day**", the **First** and **not** the Seventh Day of the week should be hallowed and kept? Could that be what **God** actually and substantially wills and has in mind that **we** actually should read between the lines "engraven in stone"?

Nevertheless these words keep me worrying: "*doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation*"...? Why take all the trouble to include the limitation "The Seventh Day" with the view to the "*everlasting and perpetual obligation*" of it **if it isn't?**

Christ Our Example

All objections to the Seventh Day Sabbath are of no "*substance*" if **Christ** – He being "Lord of the Sabbath Day" – be taken as example of what God expects of us about the Sabbath Day. Jesus through claim and act and word, through destination and realisation, gave "*substance*" to **the Seventh** or "Sabbath Day" as He gave no other day of the week! Jesus **actually, confirmed**, yea, **virtually, instituted**, the Sabbath, the **first** time – **the Seventh Day being** *The-Day-of-His-Finishing-All-the-Works-of-God* when through **Victory of Life He "on the Sabbath Day"** rose from the dead!

"*Some say, that the fourth command is perpetual, but not in its literal sense; not as designing any particular proportion of time to be set apart and devoted to literal rest and religious exercises. They say that it stands in force only in a mystical sense, viz. as that weekly rest of the Jews typified spiritual rest in the Christian church; and that we under the Gospel are not to make any distinction of one day from another, but are to keep all time holy, doing every thing in a spiritual manner.*"

Says Edwards, "*That the fourth command is perpetual but not in its literal sense ... is an absurd way of interpreting (it) as it refers to Christians.*" But "*most absurd*" is it that after Edwards **himself** has argued that the Fourth Commandment "*at least as to the substance of it*" is literal **but for the only words of it with literal intention**, he **objects** to taking it **not literally!** A few paragraphs after Edwards insisted that the limitation "The **Seventh** Day" "*in the Fourth Command*" "*as to substance of it*" is not of "*everlasting and of perpetual obligation*", he says, "*The very design of the command (is) to fix the time of worship*". "*The first command fixes the object, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time (of worship)*".

Because “*the object*”, “*the means*” and “*the manner*” of worship are of “*everlasting and of perpetual obligation*”, **therefore** the first commandment, the second commandment and the third commandment are of “*everlasting and of perpetual obligation*”. But despite the Fourth Commandment also being of “*everlasting and of perpetual obligation*”, “**the Seventh Day**” – **which it is about** – is **not!**

The first command fixes the object, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time, that is, the Day of Worship. If the Fourth Command stands in force now only as signifying a spiritual, Christian rest, and holy behaviour at all times, it does not remain as one of the ten commands, but is entirely abolished. For it is the very design of the commandment to fix the literal Day of Worship. Besides being spiritual and moral, or rather, while being spiritual and moral, yes indeed, exactly for being spiritual and moral, the Fourth Commandment spiritually and morally fixes the Seventh Day for being the spiritually and morally specific DAY for worship and therefore of Worship. If it stands in force now only as signifying a spiritual, Christian rest, and holy behaviour at all times – not as signifying the specific and specified DAY for worship and of Worship, it does not remain as one of the ten commands ... it is abolished entirely! “*For if the command be so far abolished, it is entirely abolished*”, says Edwards. **It cannot in any single aspect of it be abolished and not entirely!**

“The main objection against the perpetuity of this command is, that the duty required is not moral. Those laws whose obligation arises from the nature of things, and from the general state and nature of mankind, as well as from God’s positive revealed will, are called moral laws. Others, whose obligation depends merely upon God’s positive and arbitrary institution, are not moral; such as the ceremonial laws, and the precepts of the Gospel, about the two sacraments. Now, the objectors say, they will allow all that is moral in the decalogue to be of perpetual obligation; but this command, they say, is not moral.”

Edwards’ thinking shows the philosophy of his time – of the **age of reason** and “**natural religion**”. “*Those laws whose obligation arises from the nature of things, and from the general state and nature of mankind, as well as from God’s positive revealed will, are called moral laws.*” It supposes that laws that do **not need** to be revealed positively – laws man (supposedly) **naturally** is conscience of and spontaneously feels he should obey – are “**moral**” being “*obvious to the understandings of men, (that) they might have seen it of themselves*”. Accordingly, the Sabbath, it being **not** a naturally known law, it being possible to be known only because of its “*positive*” revelation or “*arbitrary institution*” in the Scriptures, is **not** “*moral*”.

Such an understanding of what is “*moral*” and what “*positive and arbitrary*”, **hardly makes sense today**. From the standpoint of God’s **revealed** “*will and mind*”, there exists no such distinction in the **Scriptures**. Such a distinction is purely **imaginary**, or, in the language of Edwards’ day, “*reasonable*”. Quite the contrary is true and truth, namely that those laws that are “*positive*” and “*instituted*” by the free or “*arbitrary*” will of God in the Scriptures, **are, exactly for that reason, “moral”** in the sense of being **divine and spiritual, good and ethical, binding and conscientious**.

Agreeing the Sabbath Commandment is not “*moral*”, Edwards **objects** the Sabbath is “*perpetual*”. “*... If it should be allowed that there is no morality belonging to the command, and that the duty required is founded merely on arbitrary institution, it cannot therefore be certainly concluded that the command is not perpetual. We know that there may be commands in force under the Gospel, and to the end of the world, which are not moral: such are the institutions of the two sacraments. And why may there not be positive commands in force in all ages of the church?*”

Notice how unambiguously Edwards argues for the “*perpetuity*” of the Sabbath Day of the Old Testament even in Gospel times: “*If positive, arbitrary institutions are in force in gospel-times, what is there which concludes that no positive precept given before the times of the gospel can yet continue in force?*” The answer of course is, **There is nothing!** The Sabbath Day of the Old Testament **yet continue in force** in Gospel times. But no Sunday proponent will allow it.

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of **divine service** ...”, says the preacher to the Hebrew Christians. **That** makes it “*moral*”, “**the Holy Ghost signifying**”. (Hb.9:1 and 8.) “*It is sufficient.*” Nothing about this is “*merely*”, as were the Sabbath inferior because “*founded merely on arbitrary institution*” ... of Scripture!

Objectors to the Seventh Day Sabbath of “arbitrary institution”, like Edwards, say they will allow all that is moral in the decalogue to be of perpetual obligation, and, all that is moral in this command the Fourth – but this single word that concerns the Seventh Day Sabbath. This single word that concerns the Seventh Day Sabbath, says Edwards, does not belong to “the substance of it (the Law)”. Only this, these objectors say, is not moral or even perpetual! But this objection is weak and insufficient for the purpose for which it is brought, or to prove that the fourth commandment, as to the substance of it, is not of perpetual obligation, or to prove that the fourth commandment, as to the substance of The Seventh Day, is not moral or of perpetual obligation. This single word, as this commandment, as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation, as to the substance of it, as to the least of it, it being moral exactly for the reason of being “positive” and “instituted”

by the **free** or “*arbitrary*” **will of God in the Scriptures**, and **for that reason**, is divine and spiritual, good and ethical, binding and conscientious.

Not for one moment can it be allowed that there is no morality nor perpetuity belonging to **The Seventh Day**, and that the duty required is founded merely on “*the nature of things, and from the general state and nature of mankind*”. Man easily disposes of an arbitrary institution of God if not *suitable* to himself and as easily replaces it with what is *agreeable* to himself and his own *reason* and judgement. Most ironic about this is, man replaces the one thing for what he considers its lack of moral incumbency with another of equal lack of moral incumbency.

And why may there not be positive commands **that are moral** in force in **all** ages of the church? If positive, arbitrary institutions that **are moral**, and, **in force, in Gospel-times**, what is there which concludes that no positive precept given **before** the times of the Gospel – like the **Fourth Commandment** “concerning **The Seventh Day**” – can yet continue in force?

As we have observed already, the thing in general, that there should be **The Seventh Day of the week** set apart to be devoted to religious exercises, is **founded in the fitness of the thing**, its fitness arising from its **divine** creation and institution and its **divine** intent and revelation, which, **eschatologically**, is **purely Christian!** It is – we discover in the Gospel – **founded in the fitness of the thing: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!**

The nature of natural things, and the nature and universal state of mankind, **are irrelevant** as pertains “*the fitness of the thing*” for the People of God. “*The fitness of the thing*” – of the Day of Worship – entirely depends upon **God**, upon this: He being the Designer, Author and Finisher of it, upon this: He being the One Who sanctifies the Sabbath, Who Blesses the Sabbath, and Who Rests the Sabbath – these very acts of God being the Sabbath’s holiness. The Seventh Day Sabbath is founded upon **God** and upon His **Work** and **Word**, or it is not “*founded*” at all and in itself possesses no sanctity.

There is as much reason that there should be a commandment of perpetual and universal obligation about this, as about any other Christian duty whatsoever. For if the thing in general, that there be a **DAY, fixed, for Worship**, if **that** thing be founded in the nature of its **Author and Finisher and His Work and Word**, there is consequent upon it a necessity, that **IT** be limited by a command; for there must be **THIS DAY** fixed, **or else the general moral duty cannot be observed.**

Nevertheless, “*The particular determination of the proportion of time in the fourth commandment, is also founded in the nature of things, only our understandings are not sufficient absolutely to determine it of*

themselves. We have observed already, that without doubt one proportion of time is in itself fitter than another, and a certain continuance of time fitter than any other, considering the universal state and nature of mankind, which God may see, though our understandings are not perfect enough absolutely to determine it. So that the difference between this command and others, does not lie in this, that other commands are founded in the fitness of the things themselves, arising from the universal state and nature of mankind, and this not; but, only that the fitness of other commands is more obvious to the understandings of men, and they might have seen it of themselves; but this could not be precisely discovered and positively determined without the assistance of revelation.” Which implies the precision of the thing and its positive determination, i.e., **the Seventh-Day-ness of it** and the **greater reliance** of it on divine and merciful revelation. It implies the greater need of God’s compassion towards us, men, in our *universal state and nature of being sinners and ignorant*, in our *universal state and nature of being incapable and incapacitated in order to know, to understand or to obey what we have been assisted in by grace and revelation*. It amounts to this, that the Seventh-Day-ness of the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment requires more than its “*mere*” “*arbitrary institution*” as in Holy Writ and Law; it requires indeed an eschatological and christological nature and “*substance*” that **point to** its Author as well as its End. The Seventh-Day-ness of the Sabbath requires that it be **at the service and honour of its LORD, Jesus Christ. The ultimate realisation of this purpose and end was the Sabbath’s availability and readiness, NOT IN ITSELF, but in fact by its divine creation, destination and appointment for being the day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead!**

On this basis only could we conclude, that *the particular determination of The Seventh Day in the fourth commandment, is also founded in the nature of its creation and end which must be found in the Word of God, Jesus Christ. Only our understandings are not sufficient even vaguely to determine it of themselves. We have observed already, that without doubt NO DAY is in itself fitter than another, and its continuance through time, only God may see, though our understandings are not perfect enough absolutely to grasp it. So that the difference between this command and others, does not lie in this, that other commands are founded in the fitness of things themselves, and does not arise from the universal state and nature of mankind, but, only in that the fitness of the command could not be precisely discovered and positively determined without the assistance of revelation!* So that the command of God, that **The Seventh Day** should be devoted to religious exercises, is founded **only in divine** direction, to exactly determine it. The **command** of God, that **The Seventh Day** should be devoted to exercises

of worship unambiguously implies man's reason is INSufficient to determine differently.

“God appears in his Word (Jesus Christ) laying abundantly more weight on the precept concerning the Sabbath, than on any precept of the (revealed) law. (The Seventh Day Sabbath) is in the decalogue, one of the ten commands, which were delivered by God with an audible voice (which was Christ speaking). It was written with his own finger (which is God's Holy Spirit)!” God appears in his Word Jesus Christ laying abundantly more weight on the precept concerning the Sabbath, than on any precept of the law but on loving thy God with all thine heart, and more than on any promise of the prophets but on the promise of the Word Himself and more than on any portion of the patriarchs but on their portion in Christ. By such exception “God concerning the Seventh Day spoke” in a category of its own. God appears in his Word Jesus Christ laying abundantly more weight on the Sabbath DAY than on any other in the LIFE OF CHRIST, for being the special day of his mercies, fame and feat of conquering the last enemy and establishing eternally the Kingdom of heaven amongst men. *The weekly Sabbath is spoken of by the prophets* – figuring forth, “This, what you see and hear today”, as pointed out by Peter on the Sabbath Day of Pentecost.

“The Sabbath is spoken of as a great part of holiness of life, and is placed among moral duties” for its ethical “keeping”. *It is foretold, that this command should be observed in gospel-times”* – that is, because of Jesus Christ! ... *“It is also mentioned as a duty that should be most acceptable to God from his people, even where the prophet is speaking of gospel-times”* – again that is, because of Jesus Christ! Jonathan Edwards indeed shows depth of insight and “understandings”. Edwards' further sermons deal on this matter more extensively.

Aptly Edwards relates the question of the meaning of the Sabbath Day to Isaiah 58 verses 13 and 14, *“If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.”*

In these words Isaiah sings to God's honour perceiving victory in Christ Jesus. The emphasis is placed on God's pleasure and delight – “not thine”, o man! The emphasis is placed on God's own Way, on the doing of His own Will, on His finding His own Satisfaction, on His speaking His own Word, on His delighting Himself in the Lord His beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased: “For the mouth of the LORD

has spoken it” ... “in these last days in the Son”! In these words from the prophet Isaiah is sung God's glory in Jesus Christ – “of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace: For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”! The Sabbath has nothing of its own; it has and is nothing of and by itself; its very existence – like ours – is owed to God's mercies in Jesus Christ our LORD. And here in Isaiah, the Sabbath serves this purpose; and so should man's keeping of it. Herein the Sabbath finds its meaning; herein the Sabbath Day is completely “honoured”. It has no other reason for being. God created the Sabbath Day for this and this only. God therefore calls it “Mine holy”! The Sabbath is separated unto God's honour – “hallowed” for nothing else. What Isaiah with these many words says, Jesus in one word says: “The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath Day”! Jesus everlastingly says it in the Present Tense. *God appears in his Word laying abundantly more weight on the Sabbath, than on any precept of the Law* because He abundantly more lays weight on mercy and Covenant fidelity. *Yes, here the man is pronounced blessed, who keeps the Sabbath from polluting it and chooses the thing that it pleased God to choose. “For thus saith the Lord, unto the impotent that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place and a name, better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”* Without contradiction the less is blessed by the better. He now has obtained a more excellent ministry by how much more also He now is the Mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises – a covenant made perfect by the bringing in of a better hope that brings many sons unto glory. (A Jewish pastor preaching to a Jewish congregation on the Sabbath Day.) The prophet Isaiah associates the Sabbath Day with this Covenant of Grace! And Jonathan Edwards associates the Sabbath Day with this Covenant of Grace: *“Besides, the strangers spoken of ... are the Gentiles, that should be called in the times of the gospel, as is evident ... “For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.” Yet it is represented here as their duty to keep the Sabbath; “Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, everyone that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.”* (When did Edwards last mention the First Day of the week?)

The *“final destruction of Jerusalem ... was after the dissolution of the Jewish constitution, and after the Christian dispensation was fully set*

up. Yet, it is plainly implied in these words of our Lord, ("Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.") that even then Christians were bound to a strict observation of the Sabbath." Edwards finds this "a further argument for the perpetuity of the Sabbath".

From his considerations of **these, Seventh-Day Sabbath Scriptures**, Edwards endeavours to show that "*It is the mind and will of God that the **First Day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties***". And from his considerations of **these, Seventh-Day Sabbath Scriptures**, Edwards endeavours to show it from **1 Corinthians 16:1-2!**

One should not for the purpose of the discourse we are engaged in, forget it!

Thus Edwards ends his first Sermon based on 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

8.4.2.

^{96c} **Sermon 14**

The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath

1 COR. xvi. 1, 2. Now concerning the collection to the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

The doctrine founded on these words was this, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties.

I proposed to discourse upon this doctrine under two propositions: and having already, under the first, endeavoured to prove, That one day of the week is, throughout all ages, to be devoted to religious exercises; I proceed now to the

II. PROP. That it is the will of God, that under the Gospel dispensation, or in the Christian church, this day should be the first day of the week.

In order to the confirmation of this, let the following things be considered.

1. The words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against this being the day that should be the Sabbath, any more than against any other day, That this day, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, is the first of the week, should be kept as a Sabbath, is no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command, than that the seventh of the week should be the day. The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a Sabbath; they merely determine, that we should rest and keep as a Sabbath every seventh day, or one day after every six. It says, "Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest;"

^{96d} *which implies no more, than that after six days of labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth, rest and keep it holy. And this we are obliged to do for ever. But the words no way determine where those six days shall begin, and so where the rest or Sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, i. e. where to begin and end it; but that is supposed to be determined otherwise.*

The Jews did not know, by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest; this was determined by another precept. The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; but it does not appoint any. It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of labour, which particular day God either had or should appoint. The particular day was determined for that nation in another place, viz. in Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 26. "And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord has said, Tomorrow is

the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake, today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And Moses said, Eat that today: for today is a Sabbath unto the Lord: today ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." This is the first place where we have any mention made of the Sabbath, from the first Sabbath on which God rested.

It seems that the Israelites, in the time of their bondage in Egypt, had lost the true reckoning of time by the days of the week, reckoning from the first day of the creation. They were slaves, and in cruel bondage, and had in a great measure forgotten the true religion: for we are told, that they served the gods of Egypt. And it is not to be sup-

^{97a} posed, that the Egyptians would suffer their slaves to rest from their work every seventh day. Now, they having remained in bondage for so long a time, had probably lost the weekly reckoning; therefore, when God had brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness, he made known to them the Sabbath, on the occasion and in the manner recorded in the text just now quoted. Hence, we read in Nehemiah, that when God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, &c. he made known unto them his holy Sabbath; Neh. ix. 14. "And madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath." To the same effect, we read in Ezek. xx. 10, 12. "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover also, I gave them my Sabbaths."

But they never would have known where the particular day would have fallen by the fourth command. Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their Jewish Sabbath. But that does not prove, that the day was determined and appointed by it. The precept in the fourth command is to be taken generally of such a seventh day as God should appoint, or had appointed. And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church; therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day. But this does not prove, but that the same words refer to another appointed seventh day, now in the Christian church. The words of the fourth command may oblige the church, under different dispensations, to observe different appointed seventh days, as well as the fifth command may oblige different persons to honour different fathers and mothers.

The Christian Sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish Sabbath; because it is kept after six days of labour as well as that; it is the seventh, reckoning from the beginning of our first working-day, as well as that was the seventh from the beginning of their first working day. All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God's rest from the

creation, and now they begin the day after that. It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.

Therefore, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath, there is no change from the fourth command; but the change is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their working days. So that those words of the fourth command, viz. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;" afford no objection against that which is called the Christian Sabbath; for these words remain in full force. Neither does any just objection arise from the words following, viz. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it." These words are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh, because God has set us the example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time. What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is because God worked six days and rested the seventh.

It is true, these words did carry something further in their meaning, as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of Christ: it was then also intended by them, that the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation. But this is no objection to the supposition, that the words, as they relate to us, do not import all that they did, as they related to the Jews. For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments, which are known and allowed not to be of the same import, as they relate to us, and as they related to the Jews, viz. these words, in the preface to the ten commands, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the ^{97b}land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." – These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all to whom the commandments themselves are spoken; for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments. But they do not now remain in all the signification which they had, as they respected the Jews. For we never were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, except in a mystical sense. – The same may be said of those words which are inserted in the commandments themselves, Deut. v. 15. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out

thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

So that all the arguments of those who are against the Christian Sabbath, drawn from the fourth command, which are all their strength, come to nothing.

2. That the ancient church was commanded to keep a seventh day in commemoration of the work of creation, is an argument for the keeping of a weekly Sabbath in commemoration of the work of redemption, and not any reason against it.

We read in Scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command are to be taken as of the same force to those who belong to the new creation, with respect to that new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to that. We read, That "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and the church of old were to commemorate that work. But when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, those that belong to this new heaven and new earth, by a like reason, are to commemorate the creation of their heaven and earth.

The Scriptures teach us to look upon the old creation as destroyed, and as it were annihilated by sin; or, as being reduced to a chaos again, without form and void, as it was at first. Jer. iv. 22,23. "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light!" i. e. they were reduced to the same state in which they were at first; the earth was without form and void, and there was no light, but darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The Scriptures further teach us to call the gospel-restoration and redemption, a creation of a new heaven and a new earth; Isa. lxx. 17,18. "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." And Isa.li. 16. "And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." And chap. lxxvi. 22. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make," &c. -In these places we are not only told of a new creation, or new heavens and a new earth, but we are told what is meant by it, viz. The gospel renovation, the making of Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; saying unto Zion, "Thou art my people," &c. The prophet, in all these places, is prophesying of the gospel-redemption.

The gospel-state is every where spoken of as a renewed state of things, wherein old things are passed away, and all things become new:

we are said to be created unto Christ Jesus unto good works: all things are restored and reconciled whether in heaven or in earth, and God has caused light to shine out of darkness, as he did at the beginning; and the dissolution of the Jewish state was often spoken of in the Old Testament as the end of the world. – But we who belong to the gospel-church, belong to the new creation; and therefore there seems to be at least as much reason, that we should commemorate the work of this creation, as that the members of the ancient Jewish church should commemorate the work of the old creation.

3. There is another thing which confirms it, that the fourth command teaches God's resting from the new creation, as well as from the old: which is that the
^{98a}Scriptures expressly speak of the one, as parallel with the other, i. e. Christ's resting from the work of redemption, is expressly spoken of as being parallel with God's resting from the work of creation. Heb. iv. 10. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Now, Christ rested from his works when he rose from the dead, on the first day of the week. When he rose from the dead, then he finished his work of redemption; his humiliation was then at an end; he then rested, and was refreshed.- When it is said, "There remaineth a rest to the people of God;" in the original, it is, a sabbatizing, or the keeping of a Sabbath: and this reason is given for it, "For he that entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his." These three things at least we are taught by these words:

(1.) To look upon Christ's rest from his work of redemption, as parallel with God's rest from the work of creation; for they are expressly compared together, as parallel one with the other.

(2.) They are spoken of as parallel, particularly in this respect, viz. The relation which they both have to the keeping of a Sabbath among God's people, or with respect to the influence which these two rests have, as to sabbatizing in the church of God: for it is expressly with respect to this that they are compared together. Here is an evident reference to God's blessing and hallowing the day of his rest from the creation to be a Sabbath, and appointing a Sabbath of rest in imitation of him.^(90,93) For the apostle is speaking of this, ver. 4. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Thus far is evident; whatever the apostle has respect to by this keeping of a "Sabbath by the people of God, whether it be a weekly sabbatizing on earth, or a sabbatizing in heaven.

(3.) It is evident in these words, that the preference is given to the latter rest, viz. The rest of our Saviour from his works, with respect to the influence it should have, or relation it bears, to the sabbatizing of the

people of God, now under the gospel, evidently implied in the expression, "There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God. For he that entered into his rest," &c. For, in this expression, There remaineth, it is intimated that the old sabbatism appointed in remembrance of God's rest from the work of creation, does not remain, but ceases; and that this new rest, in commemoration of Christ's resting from his works, remains in the room of it.

4. The Holy Ghost has implicitly told us, that the Sabbath which was instituted in commemoration of the old creation, should not be kept in gospel-times. Isa. lxx. 17,16. There we are told, that when God should create new heavens and a new earth, the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind. If this be so, it is not to be supposed, that we are to keep a seventh part of time, on purpose to remember it, and call it to mind.

Let us understand this which way we will, it will not be well consistent with the keeping of one day in seven, in the gospel-church, principally for the remembrance and calling to mind of the old creation. If the meaning of the place be only this, that the old creation shall not be remembered nor come into mind in comparison with the new – that the new will be so much more remarkable and glorious, will so much more nearly concern us, so much more notice will be taken of it, and it will be thought so much more worthy to be remembered and commemorated, that the other will not be remembered, nor come into mind – it is impossible that it should be more to our purpose. For then hereby the Holy Ghost teaches us, that the Christian church has much more reason to commemorate the new creation than the old; insomuch, that the old is worthy to be forgotten in comparison with it.

And as the old creation was no more to be remembered, nor come into mind; so, in the following verse, the church is directed for ever to commemorate the new creation: "But be you glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy;" i. e. Though you forget the old, yet for ever to the end of the world, keep a remembrance of the New creation.⁽⁹⁷⁾

^{98b}5. It is an argument that the Jewish Sabbath was not to be perpetual, that the Jews were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt. One reason why it was instituted was, because God thus delivered them, as we are expressly told, Deut. v. 15. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." Now, can any person think, that God would have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every

week, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?⁽⁹⁸⁾

6. The Holy Ghost has implicitly told us, that instituted memorials of the Jews' deliverance from Egypt should be no longer upheld in gospel-times, Jer. xvi. 14, 15. The Holy Ghost, speaking of gospel-times, says, "Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into their own land." They shall no more say, The Lord liveth that brought, etc., i. e. at least they shall keep up no more any public memorials of it.⁽⁹⁹⁾

If there be a Sabbath kept up in gospel-times, as we have shown there must be, it is more just from these words to suppose, that it should be as a memorial of that which is spoken of in the latter verse, the bringing up of the children of Israel from the land of the north: that is, the redemption of Christ, and his bringing home the elect, not only from Judea, but from the north, and from all quarters of the world. – See Isa. xliii. 16-20.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

7. It is no more than just to suppose, that God intended to intimate to us, that the Sabbath ought by Christians to be kept in commemoration of Christ's redemption, in that the Israelites were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt; because that deliverance out of Egypt is an evident, known, and allowed type of it. It was ordered of God, on purpose to represent it; every thing about that deliverance was typical of this redemption, and much is made of it, principally for this reason, because it is so remarkable a type of Christ's redemption. And it was but a shadow, the work in itself was nothing in comparison with the work of redemption. What is a petty redemption of one nation from a temporal bondage, to the eternal salvation of the whole church of the elect in all ages and nations, from eternal damnation, and the introduction of them, not into a temporal Canaan, but into heaven, into eternal glory and blessedness? Was that shadow so much to be commemorated, as that a day once a week was to be kept on the account of it; and shall not we much more commemorate that great and glorious work of which it was designed on purpose to be a shadow.

Besides, the words in the fourth commandment, which speak of the deliverance out of Egypt, can be of no significance unto us, unless they are to be interpreted of the gospel-redemption: but the words of the decalogue are spoken to all nations and ages. Therefore, as the words were spoken to the Jews, they referred to the type or shadow; as they are spoken to us, they are to be interpreted of the anti-type and substance. For the Egypt from which we under the gospel are redeemed, is the

spiritual Egypt; the house of bondage from which we are redeemed, is a state of spiritual bondage. – Therefore the words, as spoken to us, are to be thus interpreted, Remember, thou wast a servant to sin and Satan, and the Lord thy God delivered thee from this bondage, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.

As the words in the preface to the ten commandments, about the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, are interpreted in our catechism, and as they have respect to us, must be interpreted, of our spiritual redemption, so, by an exact identity of reason, must these words in Deuteronomy, annexed to the fourth command, be interpreted of the same gospel-redemption.

^{99a} The Jewish Sabbath was kept on the day that the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. For we are told in Deut. v. 1.5. that this holy rest of the Sabbath was appointed in commemoration of their coming up out of Egypt. But the day of their going through the Red sea was the day of their coming up out of Egypt; for till then they were in the land of Egypt. The Red sea was the boundary of the land of Egypt. – The Scripture itself tells us, that the day on which they sung the song of Moses, was the day of their coming up out of the land of Egypt; Hosea ii. 15. "And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt;" referring plainly to that triumphant song which Moses and the children of Israel sang when they came up out of the Red sea.

The Scripture tells us, that God appointed the Jewish Sabbath in commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from their task-masters, the Egyptians, and of their rest from their hard bondage and slavery under them; Deut. v. 14, 15. "That thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." But the day that the children of Israel were delivered from their task-masters and had rest from them, was the day when the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. They had no rest from them till then. For though they were before come forth on their journey to go out of the land of Egypt; yet they were pursued by the Egyptians, and were exceedingly perplexed and distressed. But on the morning that they came up out of the Red sea, they had complete and final deliverance; then they had full rest from their task-masters. Then God said to them, "The Egyptians which ye have seen this day, ye shall see no more for ever;" Exod. xiv. 13. Then they enjoyed a joyful day of rest, a day of refreshment. Then they sang the song of Moses; and on that day was their Sabbath of rest.

But this coming up of the children of Israel out of the Red sea, was only a type of the resurrection of Christ. That people was the mystical body of Christ, and Moses was a great type of Christ himself; and besides, on that day Christ went before the children of Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, as their Saviour and Redeemer. On that morning Christ, in this pillar of cloud and fire, rose out of the Red sea, as out of great waters; which was a type of Christ's rising from a state of death, and from that great humiliation which he suffered in death.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is in Scripture represented by his coming up out of deep waters. So it is in Christ's resurrection, as represented by Jonah's coming out of the sea; Matt. xii. 40. It is also compared to a deliverance out of deep waters, Psalm lxix. 1, 2, 3, and verse 14, 15. These things are spoken of Christ, as is evident from this, that many things in this Psalm are in the New Testament expressly applied to Christ, (Compare verse 4 with John xv. 25. and ver. 9. with John ii. 17. and ver. 2 with Matt xxvii. 34, 48. and Mark xv. 23. and John xix. 29. and ver. 2 with Rom. xi. 9, 10, and ver. 25 with Acts 1:20.) – Therefore, as the Jewish Sabbath was appointed on the day on which the pillar of cloud and fire rose out of the Red sea, and on which Moses and the church, the mystical body of Christ, came up out of the same sea, which is a type of the resurrection of Christ; it is a great confirmation that the Christian Sabbath should be kept on the day of the rising of the real body of Christ from the grave, which is the antitype. For surely the Scriptures have taught us, that the type should give way to the antitype, and that the shadow should give way to the substance.

8. I argue the same thing from Psalm cxviii. 22, 23, 24. There we are taught, that the day of Christ's resurrection is to be celebrated with holy joy by the church. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The stone spoken of is Christ; he was refused and rejected by the builders, especially when he was put to death. That making him the head of the corner, which is the Lord's doing, and so marvellous in our eyes, is Christ's exalta-

^{99b} tion, which began with his resurrection. While Christ lay in the grave, he lay as a stone cast away by the builders. But when God raised him from the dead, then he became the head of the corner. Thus it is evident the apostle interprets it, Acts iv. 10, 11. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," &c. – "This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. – And the day on which this was done, we are here taught, God has made to be the day of the rejoicing of the church.

9. The abolition of the Jewish Sabbath seems to be intimate by this, that Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, lay buried on that day. Christ, the author of the world, was the author of that work of creation of which the Jewish Sabbath was the memorial. It was he that worked six days and rested the seventh day from all his works, and was refreshed. Yet he was holden in the chains of death on that day. – God, who created the world, now in his second work of creation, did not follow his own example, if I may so speak; he remained imprisoned in the grave on that day, and took another day to rest in.

The Sabbath was a day of rejoicing; for it was kept in commemoration of God's glorious and gracious works of creation and the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore we are directed to call the Sabbath a delight. But it is not a proper day for the church, Christ's spouse, to rejoice, when Christ the bridegroom lies buried in the grave, as Christ says, Matt. ix.15. "That the children of the bride-chamber cannot mourn, while the bridegroom is with them. But the time will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; then shall they mourn." – While Christ was holden under the chains of death, then the bridegroom was taken from them; then it was a proper time for the spouse to mourn and not rejoice. But when Christ rose again, then it was a day of joy, because we are begotten again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

10. Christ has evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead, by taking it from time to time to appear to the apostles; and he chose this day to pour out the Holy Ghost on the apostles, which we read of in the second chapter of Acts. For this was on Pentecost, which was on the first day of the week, as you may see by Levit. xxiii. 15,16. And he honoured this day by pouring out his Spirit on the apostle John, and giving him his visions, Rev. i. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," &c. – Now doubtless Christ had his meaning in thus distinguishingly honouring this day.

11. It is evident by the New Testament, that this was especially the day of the public worship of the primitive church, by the direction of the apostles. We are told that this was the day that they were wont to come together to break bread: and this they evidently did with the approbation of the apostles, inasmuch as they preached to them on that day; and therefore doubtless they assembled together by the direction of the apostles. Acts xx. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." So the Holy Ghost was careful that the public contributions should be on this day, in all the churches, rather than on any other day, as appears by our text.

12. This first day of the week is in the New Testament called the Lord's day; see Rev. i. 10. Some say, how do we know that this was the first day of the week? Every day is the Lord's day. But it is the design of John to tell us when he had those visions. And if by the Lord's day is meant any day, how does that inform us when that event took place?

But what is meant by this expression we know, just in the same way as we know what is the meaning of any word in the original of the New Testament, or the meaning of any expression in an ancient language, viz. by what we find to be the universal signification of the expression in ancient times. This expression, the Lord's day, is found by the ancient use of the whole Christian^{100a} church, by what appears in all the writings of ancient times, even from the apostles' days, to signify the first day of the week.

And the expression implies in it the holiness of the day. For doubtless the day is called the Lord's day, as the sacred supper is called the Lord's supper, which is so called, because it is a holy supper, to be celebrated in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and of his redemption. So this is a holy day, to be kept in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and his redemption.

The first day of the week being in Scripture called the Lord's day, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God; for God has been pleased to call it by his own name. When any thing is called by the name of God in Scripture, this denotes the appropriation of it to God. – Thus God put his name upon his people Israel of old; Numbers vi. 27. "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel." They were called by the name of God, as it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 14. "If my people which are called by my name," &c. i. e. They were called God's people, or the Lord's people. This denoted that they were a holy peculiar people above all others. Deut. vii. 6. "Thou art a holy people unto the Lord;" and so in ver. 14. and many other places.

So the city Jerusalem was called by God's name; Jer. xxv. 29. "Upon the city which is called by my name." Dan. ix. 18,19. "And the city which is called by thy name," &c. This denoted that it was a holy city, a city chosen of God above all other cities for holy uses, as it is often called the holy city, as in Neh. xi. 1. "To dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city;" and in many other places.

So the temple is said to be, a house called by God's name; 1 Kings viii. 43. "This house that is called by my name." And often elsewhere. That is, it was called God's house, or the Lord's house. This denoted that it was called a holy place, a house devoted to holy uses, above all others. So also we find that the first day of the week is called by God's name, being called in Scripture God's day, or the Lord's day, which denotes that it is a holy day, a day appropriated to holy uses, above all others in

the week.

13. The tradition of the church from age to age, though it be no rule, yet may be a great confirmation of the truth in such a case as this is. We find by all accounts, that it has been the universal custom of the Christian church, in all ages, even from the age of the apostles, to keep the first day of the Week. We read in the writings which remain of the first, second, and third centuries, of the Christians keeping the Lord's day; and so in all succeeding ages: and there are no accounts that contradict them. – This day has all along been kept by Christians, in all countries throughout the world, and by almost all that have borne the name of Christians, of all denominations, however different in their opinions as to other things.

Now, although this be not sufficient of itself without a foundation in Scripture; yet it may be a confirmation of it, because here is really matter of conviction in it to our reason. Reason may greatly confirm truths revealed in the Scriptures. The universality of the custom throughout all Christian countries, in all ages, by what account we have of them, is a good argument, that the church had it from the apostles: and it is difficult to conceive how all should come to agree to set up such a custom through the world, of different sects and opinions, and we have no account of any such thing.

14. It is no way weakening to these arguments, that there is nothing more plainly said about it in the New Testament, till John wrote his Revelation, because there is a sufficient reason to be given for it. In all probability it was purposely avoided by the Holy Spirit, in the first settling of Christian churches in the world, both among the heathen and among the Jews, but especially for the ^{100b} sake of the Jews, and out of tenderness to the Jewish Christians. For it is evident that Christ and the apostles declared one thing after another to them gradually as they could bear it.

The Jews had a regard for their Sabbath above almost any thing in the laws of Moses; and there was that in the Old Testament which tended to uphold them in the observance of this, much more strongly than any thing else that was Jewish. God had made so much of it, had so solemnly, frequently, and carefully commanded it, and had often so dreadfully punished the breach of it, that there was more colour for their retaining this custom than almost any other.

Therefore Christ dealt very tenderly with them in this point. Other things of this nature we find very gradually revealed. Christ had many things to say, as we are informed, which yet he said not, because they could not as yet bear them, and gave this reason for it, that it was like putting new wine into old bottles. They were so contrary to their old customs, that Christ was gradual in revealing them. He gave here a little

and there a little, as they could bear; and it was a long time before he told them plainly the principal doctrines of the kingdom of heaven. – He took the most favourable opportunities to tell them of his sufferings and death, especially when they were full of admiration at some signal miracle, and were confirmed in it, that he was the Messiah.

He told them many things much more plainly after his resurrection than before. But even then, he did not tell them all, but left more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. They therefore were much more enlightened after that than before. However, as yet he did not reveal all. The abolition of the ceremonial law about meats and drinks was not fully known till after this.

The apostles were in the same manner careful and tender of those to whom they preached and wrote. It was very gradually that they ventured to teach them the cessation of the ceremonial laws of circumcision and abstinence from unclean meats. How tender is the apostle Paul with such as scrupled, in the fourteenth chapter of Romans! He directs those who had knowledge, to keep it to themselves, for the sake of their weak brethren. Rom. xiv. 22. – But I need say no more to evince this.

However, I will say this, that it is very possible that the apostles themselves at first might not have this change of the day of the Sabbath fully revealed to them. The Holy Ghost, at his descent, revealed much to them, yet after that, they were ignorant of much of gospel-doctrine; yea, they were so a great while after they acted the part of apostles, in preaching, baptising, and governing the church. Peter was surprised when he was commanded to eat meats legally unclean; and so were the apostles in general, when Peter was commanded to go to the Gentiles, to preach to them.

Thus tender was Christ of the church while an infant. He did not feed them with strong meat, but was careful to bring in the observance of the Lord's day by degrees, and therefore took all occasions to honour it, by appearing from time to time of choice on that day; by sending down his Spirit on that day in that remarkable manner at Pentecost; by ordering Christians to meet in order to break bread on that day, and by ordering their contributions and other duties of worship to be holden on it; thus introducing the observance of it by degrees. And though as yet the Holy Ghost did not speak very plainly about it, yet God took special care that there should be sufficient evidences of his will, to be found out by the Christian church, when it should be more established and settled, and should have come to the strength of a man.

Thus I leave it with everyone to judge, whether there be not sufficient evidence, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be kept by the Christian church as a Sabbath?

8.4.2.1.

Whose Idea, God's or Paul's or of Both?

From p. 183 ...

"1 COR. xvi, 1, 2. Now concerning the collection to the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

The doctrine founded on these words was this, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties."

An important Christian "*doctrine*", according to Edwards and the whole Sunday-keeping Church, is "*founded on these words*". It seems a heavy structure is raised on but meagre foundation! This foundation however, says Edwards, "*is the mind and will of God*", and the idea that "*the mind and will of God*" constitutes this foundation, says he, must be found in "*these words*", the words of 1 Cor.16:1-2. Now in 1Cor.16:1-2 the Name of God indeed appears, but it appears not in connection with the "*doctrine*" "*that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians*", but in connection with the way in which "*God has prospered every one of you*". As "*God has prospered him, let every one of you lay by him in store*". I.e., the Name of God appears in connection with His **Providence**. As it was the mind and will of God to enable each believer **in his daily labour, so, is God** kept in mind in the words of the Scripture passage 1 Cor.16:1-2.

Paul – for good reason of course – proposes **his personal idea** "*concerning the collection to the saints, (that) upon the first day of the week every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him*". "**I** recommended" ("*gave orders*"), says Paul. "So that there be no gatherings when I come ... **I** recommended ... you do your individual savings up at home on the First Day of the week"! (A precise translation!) **IT IS NOT, GOD'S "WILL AND MIND" CONCERNING THE FIRST DAY** that is here mentioned, commanded or just implied – it is **PAUL'S "CONCERNING THE COLLECTION"**.

"*These words*", "upon the First Day of the week let every one of you" etc., are not God's thought and instruction but Paul's?

If God's idea then He through Paul here **introduces** to Christianity the First Day which Paul, **otherwise**, would not have said a thing about. If not here introduced, the First Day **being already and already having been** the Day normally and punctually observed among Christians for the very reason and purpose allegedly here proposed, "*the ... day especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties*", **Paul would have had no reason here to instruct it**. Had the First Day already been the Christian Day for the act of Worship, charity, Paul would have

taken **for granted** "*the time*" and would have had no reason to **tell** the Church to perform this duty of Worship "on the **First Day**". He **only** would have told them to have their contributions ready "**when I come**". **By the fact of the First Day's mention** Paul unmistakably does **not** take for granted **the day for the duty** he here proposes – which duty Sunday arguments presuppose as a liturgical act of the Church's **Worship**. It means the Churches did **not** regularly regard for Worship the day Paul here proposes for **this**, "*religious exercise*", or for **any**, "*religious exercises*" as official, divinely obligated, worship. **Or** this must mean this is the **first and only time in history** and in the New Testament we read of the **introduction** of the First Day as Christian Day of Worship. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 must then be regarded as the First Day's direct **institution** as Christian Day of Worship. If God is the subject of "instruction" here, then we do have in Scripture the "*command in so many words*" of the First Day of the week being "*determined day of the week we should keep as a Sabbath*". **Or we do not at all here have such "command" – which can only be the act of God**. Or we have the idea of **Paul** for quite another reason and purpose than for instituting the First Day as the Lord's Day! So we **either** regard Paul's mention of the First Day here as his **own** idea and the First Day **not** the Christian Day of Worship but the day for an **extraordinary**, and **temporary** exigency, **or**, we regard Paul's mention of the First Day here as that of **God** and as the **New** Christian Day of Worship – not known or observed **before this** episode in Christian history and **never before** promised, prophesied or just hinted at however vaguely!

If Paul were the initiator of the First Day's observance here in 1 Cor.16:1-2, then one might justifiably ask, Why wasn't it introduced from the beginning of the Church?

By understanding the phrase, "On the First Day" etc. as Paul's idea and not God's it is not to say the Inspiration of the Scriptures is denied. Paul does through the Holy Spirit give this guidance to the Church. But **for what purpose** do both he and the Spirit "*intend*" or "*intimate*" the guidance, the "*instruction*" or "*command*"? **That** makes the difference whether the Holy Spirit in this passage tells the Church to replace the Seventh Day Sabbath with Sunday observance, or whether He inspired Paul to recommend to the Churches to use **the opportunity the First Day afforded in the daily circumstances of life of the time** for the very **private and individual** "*exercise*" of determining how much – depending on how God enabled one – to put aside and save up of one's past week's earnings **specifically** for the poor brethren of **Judea** – because Paul also told us that he doesn't want that type of business when he comes to arrange delivery of the **Congregations'** charity. **That**, the Holy Spirit through Paul told the Church to do no doubt. But to say the

Holy Spirit told the Church of all times what Sunday protagonists demand, is to ply the Holy Spirit to man's fancies.

8.4.2.2.

“One Day” = “This Day”

“I proposed to discourse upon this doctrine under two propositions; and having already, under the first, endeavoured to prove, That one day of the week is, throughout all ages, to be devoted to religious exercises; I proceed now to the II. Proposition, That it is the will of God, that under the Gospel dispensation, or in the Christian church, this day should be the first day of the week.”

(It seems the Old Dispensation was the one of Christian freedom, while the New is the one of legalism: Under the first dispensation, any “one day of the week ... throughout all ages, (was) to be devoted to religious exercises”; “under the Gospel dispensation or in the Christian church” though, “it is the will of God, that this day should be the first day of the week”.)

In order to the confirmation of this, let the following things be considered,

The words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against this (the First Day of the week) being the day that should be the Sabbath, any more than against any other day, That this day, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, is the first of the week, should be kept as a Sabbath, is no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command, than that the seventh of the week should be the day. The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a Sabbath; they merely determine, that we should rest and keep as a Sabbath every seventh day, or one day after every six. It says, “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest;” which implies no more, than that after six days of labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth, rest and keep it holy. And this we are obliged to do for ever.”

8.4.2.3.

Words Without Context Are Words Without Content

“It says”, says Edwards, meaning, “the fourth command”, “says”; “the words of the fourth command”, “say”. “It says”, says Edwards, “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest”. Now that, is not “the Fourth Command”, and these, are not “the words of the Fourth Command” because these are words without their context and content. “The words of the Fourth Command” are other words as well; and all together are what “it”, the Fourth Commandment, “says”. The truth is not the truth if not the truth, all the truth and nothing but the truth. These words in the context Edwards applies them do not tell the truth, nothing of the truth and nothing but untruth. “These words”, word for word from

the Fourth Commandment but only “these”, and in the way wrangled by Edwards, could not be more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command or “more opposite” its very intent and spirit, *that the Seventh Day of the week should be the day of Worship. These words, “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest”, so dissected from the rest, are no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command that the seventh of the week should be kept as a Sabbath than that the first of the week should be kept as a Sabbath, for no reason but its being so isolated from the whole. It is no more opposite for it is opposite to the ultimate to any sentence or word of the fourth commandment that “The Seventh Day” of the week should be the Sabbath Day.*

Claims Edwards: *“That this day ... the first of the week, should be kept as a Sabbath, is no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command, than that the seventh of the week should be the day”. He claims that “The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a Sabbath; they merely determine, that we should rest and keep as a Sabbath, every seventh day, or one day after every six. It says, “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest;” which implies no more, than that after six days of labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth, rest and keep it holy ... And this we are obliged to do for ever.”*

“This” ... without consideration of its relation and context within and as part of the Commandment in full! Edwards’ statements, “they merely determine”, “which implies no more”, determine and imply that “the words of the fourth command ... “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest””, stand on their own; that they do not refer to the rest of the Commandment that states, “The reason why you should remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy and should six days work and do all your work but the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God should not do any work ... is that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and rested the Seventh Day and therefore and thereby the LORD blessed it the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it the Sabbath Day” – Notice my quotation marks, for *IT* accurately is what the Commandment SAYS. THIS, the academicians merely ignore and take from, so that the rest must imply no more than what they, wish the Commandment would.

8.4.2.4.

All Days by Themselves the Same

“The words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against this (the First Day of the week) being the day that should be the Sabbath, any more than against any other day ...”. If the reason for a day that it “should be the Sabbath” existed in itself, “being the day that should be

the Sabbath”, **then**, “*the words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against **this** (the First Day of the week) being the day that should be the Sabbath, **any more** than against **any other** day*”. But since the reason for a day that it “*should be the Sabbath*” **exists NOT in itself**, these words of the commandment, “*Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest*”, **afford no objection against the First Day for the only reason** that they afford **AS MUCH** objection against the First Day of the week than they afford against **any other** day of the week “*being the day that should be the Sabbath*”. Which makes the Commandment completely senseless, pointless and superfluous. .

“*Any more than against any other day*”, says Edwards. How and why then do “*the words of the fourth commandment afford no objection*” to the **First** Day of the week **yet so great objection to the Seventh?** “*Every seventh day*”, says Edwards, “*or one day after every six*”, but **not** the **Seventh** Day nor any but the **First** Day of the week! If *the words of the fourth commandment* do not in fact afford objection to the **First** Day there couldn’t be **any** day they afford objection to, nor any day they could afford **support** to!

8.4.2.5.

Why then Only “against” the Seventh Day?

This is why: Edwards (and likewise anybody else who might) **puts man where God put Himself!** (And to put man there implies that he be put there only after he had already desecrated the Sabbath of the LORD thy God.) How does Edwards manage to do it? **By reckoning or by starting to count from man’s labour in stead of from God’s labour.** That means the Christian Day of Worship is determined on the basis of **man’s merit** in stead of on the basis of **God’s merit**. (For this reason Edwards dissects the Law and reasons from only the section he quotes, ignoring the whole and as a result this starting point of the Commandment, the doing of God!) The Commandment states that **God gave as reason** for both his own and man’s keeping of the Sabbath **His own finishing, His own rest, His own blessing and His own sanctification** – in other words, God gave as reason His own **Work and Word**. But here come our dogmaticians, and **they** say, “*The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a Sabbath; they merely determine, that we should rest and keep as a Sabbath every seventh day, or one day after every six* (days of **OUR own labour!**)” They say, “*It*”, the Commandment of these words, “*says, “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest;” which implies no more* (say they), *than that after six days of (our own) labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth (day of our own labour), rest and keep it holy. And this we are obliged to do for ever.*” **Not** “*the words of the fourth command*”, **nor** the works of God “*determine*” which day. What

“*we shall*”, “*implies*” the day! We must take as starting point what **we** have done and not what God had done for “*the words of the fourth command do not determine*” it, **they** say!

Then – seeing we forget what God did both in creation and redemption – while it so happens it is the First Day of the week we now rest, we somewhere along the line had to have deviated from what originally used to be the count and sequence of the days of the week when the **Seventh** Day **used** to be the day of the week the **People** of God rested on.

And if it so happened I started work on say Tuesday? It’s not unreasonable to suppose so: “*the words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against ... the First Day of the week... any more than against any other day*”, remember! As we have said, “*any other day*”, it doesn’t matter, as long as it is **NOT** the **Seventh** and as long as it **FOR CERTAIN** is the **First** Day of the week!

But the assertion “*the words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against ... the First Day of the week... any more than against any other day*”, simply by its audacity dissects the Word of God as though He neither had anything to do with the “**making**” of the Sabbath Day (“the Sabbath was made”), nor with the **giving** of the Sabbath Day **for reason** of its **Commandment**. The Fourth Commandment would not have been under the Ten, had it not been for this **day**, The Seventh Day of creation week; the Seventh Day of Redemption-week! The “*mere*” fact of God giving **Command** and giving **this** Command, **presupposes this** day and not “*any other*”. This much is unmistakably **revealed** in and by and through the words of the Commandment **itself**, or God would be an unreasonable God, expecting of men what they could not know or distinguish from God’s own words.

“*The words (“Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest”) no way determine where those six days shall begin, and so where the rest or Sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, i. e. where to begin and end it; but that is supposed to be determined otherwise.*”

Of course these words (“*Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest*”) **on their own** do not contain any indication “*where those six days shall begin*” – Edwards cuts them off from their context that **does** suppose how to reckon the time, i.e. where to begin and end those **SEVEN** days. Reading the Commandment as it is found there, it immediately becomes clear that “*The reason why you should remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy and should six days work and do all your work but the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God should not do any work ... is that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and rested the Seventh Day and therefore*”

and thereby the LORD blessed it the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it the Sabbath Day".

Here there can be no difficulty in allowing that certain "express terms" exactly discover "where to begin and end" and **WHY**. But here there also can be no difficulty in allowing that several other things imply it, from which we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive that we on "the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God should not do any work because that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and because that HE, the Seventh Day rested".

Now not only is God Creator, but He is Preserver, Sustainer and Maintainer of his creation. The Seventh Day being God's created Sabbath Day is just as object of God's sustaining and preserving activity as creation is. Not only is God Sustainer and Preserver; He also and ultimately is Vindicator. (He is LORD.) God is Vindicator in as much as He is Planner and Designer. God reaches the end of his plan and the goal of his doing – and that was where, and is where, where God brought in the Sabbath Day. Now mark that was and is **where God appears in his Word Jesus Christ!** Retrospectively we actually discover the Sabbath Day where we find it **revealed in the life of Christ, first!** And we find the Sabbath revealed where the life of Christ **vindicates** God's **original, creation-plan** – we find the Sabbath in Christ's **resurrection** from the dead! So there can be no difficulty to exactly discover "where to begin and end the six days" and **WHY**, and "so where the rest or Sabbath shall fall" **and WHY!** No wonder we don't find the Sabbath mentioned between creation and the Passover!

The words of the fourth commandment afford **no** objection **against**, but **positively command** that **this** day, which, according to God's Word of creation, is "The **Seventh** Day", should be kept as **THE** Sabbath Day. And the **Church's** practice, "that this day, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, is the **first** of the week, should be kept as a Sabbath" is as **opposite** to the *sense and words of the Fourth Command* as the father of lies and murderer from the beginning is opposite to the Father of truth and life. "That this day ... the **first** of the week, should be kept as a Sabbath" is as **opposite** the "*sentence and word of the fourth command that the seventh of the week should be the day*", as Satan's words, "Ye shall not surely die", are opposite to those of God, "Thou shalt surely die".

*"There is no direction in the fourth command **how** to reckon the time, i. e. where to begin and end it; **but** that **is supposed** to be determined otherwise. ... The Jews did not know, **by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest; this was determined by another precept. The fourth command **does** indeed suppose a particular day appointed ...***"

Edwards within the short space of this passage twice admits that "*the fourth command*" "**does indeed suppose**", "*where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest*". **Could this not be admitted**, one would have been compelled to blame God of unreasonableness – how could He expect the Israelites to obey the Commandment if they not even knew "*where to begin*"? Now if this presumption does not imply that the Fourth Commandment requires **The Seventh Day** of the week to be the Sabbath, what would? This – the reasonableness and justness of God to have "*determined*" for His People "*where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest*" – proves one thing for sure, that the Fourth Commandment or the Ten Commandments as a whole **is only part of** the Greater Law of God, his merciful Self-revelation in history in Jesus Christ and Scripture! Just so, the words "the Seventh Day" cannot be understood without taking into account the greater whole of the Fourth Commandment. It means, and I do not hesitate to say this, the Ten Commandments are senseless and useless **outside its context** of and relation to the event or history of **Redemption!** The Ten Commandments did not fall from heaven. Moses – the man whom God used to bring the People out from the land of Egypt – went up the mountain and brought down the Law to the plain. It is imperative to know the history of salvation in order to understand the Ten Commandments which came after, or, "was added". Through salvation God revealed to his people – who didn't know a thing about it – the Seventh Day of the week as His Sabbath Day. That means, as God, in the first place, revealed his love and election to his people, He revealed to them his Sabbath Rest. Then God in the second place showed and gave the People their answer he expected from them – and not *vice versa*. The Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the Covenant of **Grace**.

God in or with the giving of the Ten Commandments did not make known to Israel the Seventh Day or where to start "*their six days*". God not even by that "*other precept*" (about the manna) which Edwards presupposes, "*determined*" it for them the first time – not in isolation of their total **Passover** experience. The manna story is inseparably connected with the actual **exodus**. The manna story shows exactly by a precise reckoning or **counting**, "*where to begin*". The manna story not only "*supposes*", but "*reckons the time, i.e. ... (it) determines on which particular day to rest*", namely the Sabbath or Seventh Day of the week

the Day of **Passover** Redemption! (See Part 1 / 1, Par. 6.1.1.6.1.3.2.) Not only does the Fourth Commandment **suppose** this counting; the **history**, the **event** of **Passover redemption**, “*determines which particular day*”. **The Passover was completed in fact on the very Sabbath Day that Israel put foot on the shores of the Promised Land!** By that event and through that experience, Israel learned the first time “*on which particular day to rest*”; and which day “*to begin*” to “*reckon*” “*their six days*” of their own labour from – only from **after the Day of God’s labour** – after the zenith of **His** effort – after **The Day of Rest** and of the singing of the Song of Moses and of the Lamb.

And therefore, by **that experience**, “the Law that came after”, **does** give *direction how to reckon the time, i. e. where to begin and end it*. By **that experience**, “the Law that came after”, **does** determine on **which particular day to rest**. The Law by the fourth command, supposes the Jews **knew**. They by experience obtained knowledge. “*The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed*”.

Edwards concludes, “*The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; but it does not appoint any.*” In a certain sense this is true; God in mercy of redemption – through grace – “*appoints*”; that is, **God’s love is God’s Law basically and ultimately**: God’s love compels, constrains and restrains and as it does so, it explains His will and mind. But **without this supposition** to allege “*the fourth command does not appoint a particular day*”, **isn’t** true. The Fourth Commandment **in holding responsible** must needs “*appoint*”, i.e., it must make clear which day it holds man responsible for. The Law would not threaten with punishment if it did not “*appoint*” its command, that is, if it did not clearly and discerning distinguished **what it meant to command**. Just as the **punishment** for disobedience to the Commandments is not in so many words spelled out in the Commandments itself (like it partially is stated in the Third Commandment) it nevertheless undoubtedly appoints death for its transgression, just so the particular **day** supposed in the Fourth Commandment is appointed in the very appointment of the Commandment as such. If the Fourth Commandment “*does not appoint any particular day*” it is vain.

“*The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed; but it does not appoint any. It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day*”.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Not only is this statement self-contradictory; it is completely erroneous. **The Law’s supposing is its appointing**. It supposes The Seventh Day **of the week**, and appoints The Seventh Day **of the week. And then it states in as many words the thing it requires**. The Fourth Commandment does **NOT** “*require us to rest and keep holy a seventh day* (of our labour)”. *It requires us to rest and keep holy* “**The Seventh Day, Sabbath Day of the LORD thy God**”, i.e., it

requires us to rest and keep holy The Day of the week of **God’s** rest of and in his **own** accomplishment. The People of God **experienced** and were **privileged to share in God’s** rest of and in his **own** accomplishment, and “therefore indeed a keeping of the Sabbath remains valid for the People of God” – a precise translation of Hb.4:9 **Reading verse 8 one sees THE REASON GIVEN FOR THE SABBATH’S NEW TESTAMENT VALIDITY IS THE VERY SAME GIVEN FOR ITS OLD TESTAMENT COMMANDMENT!** Only now **God’s** rest of and in his **own** accomplishment, **takes place in Jesus Christ in resurrection** from the dead whilst under the Old Testament it took place **in escatologic mystery of Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead**.

The Law “*requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of labour, which particular day God either had or should appoint*”, Edwards states. The Law *requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day* – we say “*a seventh day*” **in anticipation** of the **Law’s** – and **God’s**, specification “*which particular day*” **that** should be, and we find “*a seventh day*” according to the **Law’s** – and **God’s** specification, **cannot be just any** day that might be *required* according to **our** labour, for “*a seventh day*” is specified, **the particular day which God either had or should appoint**. Now whichever particular day God either **had**, or **should**, appoint: it **shall** be **this** day. In the first place, **this** day is “*appointed*” as well as “*required*” **BY GOD**, “**in Whom there is no shadow of change**” and, in the second place, **this** day in fact is thus “*appointed*” as well as “*required*” **in the Scriptures** – **both** Old and New Testament!

But Edwards of course did not intend his statement, “*(the Law) requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day*”, to mean that it requires “*a seventh day*” that is no day **but the Seventh** of the week! Edwards intended the words should mean just the opposite, that “*a seventh day*” **could be any** of the seven days of the week. Then obviously lurks unacceptable **contradiction** in Edwards’ phrasing. With “*a seventh day*”, Edwards clearly doesn’t mean “**The Seventh Day**” – **NOT** the “*particular*” day God in fact “*appointed*”. So Edwards **misses** the matter or “*substance*” of the Fourth Commandment, for the Fourth Commandment, without *appointing* and *requiring* “*a seventh day*” which is discernible and for the respecting of which man is held responsible, is senseless and would imply God is unreasonable and changeable.

“*The particular day was determined for that nation in another place, viz. in Exod. xvi. 23, 25, 26. “And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake, today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the*

*morning. And Moses said, Eat that today; for **today** is ... Sabbath unto the Lord (= the **LORD'S REST**; not, "a Rest / a Sabbath"); **today** (in distinction of "any" day) ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none." This is the first place where we have any mention made of the Sabbath, from the first Sabbath on which God rested."*

Words could not more precisely determine "The Sabbath", is not "a" or "any" day. The most obvious feature of the day involved and concerned here is that its meaning lies in its being this "*particular day*", "*which is the Sabbath*", and which succeeded "*from the first Sabbath on which God rested*" to "*today*", and "*today*", is discovered again specifically for the People of God. There is no way it could be mistaken for just "a" day, be it "a seventh day" reckoned from our days of labour, for such could be any day.

It seems that the Israelites, in the time of their bondage in Egypt, had lost the true reckoning of time by the days of the week, reckoning from the first day of the creation. They were slaves, and in cruel bondage, and had in a great measure forgotten the true religion: for we are told, that they served the gods of Egypt. And it is not to be supposed, that the Egyptians would suffer their slaves to rest from their work every seventh day. Now, they having remained in bondage for so long a time, had probably lost the weekly reckoning; therefore, when God had brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness, he made known to them the Sabbath, on the occasion and in the manner recorded in the text just now quoted. Hence, we read in Nehemiah, that when God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, &c. he made known unto them his holy Sabbath; Neh. ix. 14. "And madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath." To the same effect, we read in Ezek. xx. 10, 12. "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover also, I gave them my Sabbaths."

The mercy and love of God in revealing His Day of Rest to the People of God cannot be better explained than Edwards explains it. God acts first. And He first acted in mercy and compassion. Then again it is God who acts and again He acts in love, bringing in the Law of His Love and Worship. "The Law came after / was added", says Paul; it came after **salvation**; it was added to **completed** salvation! "We are saved **unto** good works" – **not by** good works.

"They never would have known where the particular day would have fallen by the fourth command". Now that the People actually were saved from bondage and have received the Commandments, they **by confirmation knew and thereby were obliged**. "*Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their ... Sabbath*", **Edwards admits**. God "concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke", "*to the*

Jews", as He "in these last days spoke", to us. He spoke no different; He is no different; the People are the same, the One Communion of Believers, the Elect of God; "therefore a keeping of the Sabbath remains valid".

Unfortunately, Edwards admits also an untruth, for he says, "*Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their Jewish Sabbath*". He forgets that in that very Commandment, in His own words, God calls the Sabbath Day **His**, "the Sabbath of the LORD thy God". Quotes Edwards, "*He – God – made known unto them His holy* (separated unto Him) *Sabbath – Neh. ix. 14.*" It would be most preposterous for the Jews to claim **God's** "Rest" as "*their*" property and at "*their*" disposal – for that is what the word "*theirs*" implies. Now how many times and how emphatically and extensively have dogmaticians elaborated on this assertion, that the Sabbath is "*Jewish*"? It must far exceed the energy they waste on other arguments.

"They never would have known where the particular day would have fallen by the fourth command. Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their Jewish Sabbath. But that does not prove that the day was determined and appointed by the precept in the fourth command."

If ever Edwards wrote malicious nonsense, it is this. If *the day was not determined and appointed by the precept in the fourth command* it would have been **no** "command". It would have been a waste of words – which of God may not be thought for a moment! In both instances of the giving of the Law in the Old Testament it **did refer** to the Sabbath. It does not "*refer to their Jewish Sabbath*". The Sabbath is neither "*theirs*", nor "*Jewish*". The Sabbath **belongs to its "LORD – your God" – every one's** God who is **brought into covenant relationship with Him**. Again we find the Sabbath Commandment is God's Law of Love and Promise in Jesus Christ (it is eschatological). The Sabbath belongs to God and to his Covenant People – to spiritual Israel under "the sure mercies of David"!

God's intention was that the Fourth Commandment should make known the day He meant with the word, the "Sabbath". The "Sabbath" is undoubtedly indicated as "The Seventh Day" in and by the Commandment, but by way of **supposition** just as the Second Commandment is based on the supposition of the First. "The Seventh Day" **needed Grace to be made known**. And grace does not come by the Law. "The Law was added" – "added" **to grace**; "added" through God's revelation or speaking to his People by word and deed, **His mercies**. And in **that** which came first – **in mercy and in grace** – in **that**, God revealed his **Sabbath** Day in that He made known "The **Seventh** Day". He made

known “The Seventh Day” in creation and in Passover in the **one** history of **His** mercy and grace. “He concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke ... **Jesus having given them Rest**: therefore there remains a keeping of the Sabbath for God’s People.” (Hb.4:4, 8,9)

Had their ignorance about which day of the week might be the Seventh Day ever been an excuse for God’s People not to keep the Sabbath? The very fact of centuries of looking for excuses not to acknowledge, confess, believe and keep the Seventh Day of the week for the Sabbath of the LORD thy God, **proves the Church all along knew which day of the week the Seventh Day was and still is!** Only when it comes to keeping and insisting on keeping the **First Day** of the week everybody is **unable** to discover the **Seventh** Day, but **quite able** to establish which is the First!

When the Israelites tried to alter only the Sabbath’s **hours** a little they grieved God. Just close the City’s gates later than sunset – no harm! But enough to enrage Nehemiah on behalf of “*the mind and will of God*”, on behalf of the “*Seventh Day as God had appointed*”. Here ends any bickering about the Sabbath’s particularity, its divine nature and its obligation. Why are Christians so lethargic to accept and to obey when it comes to the Fourth Commandment? **Because it asks of them the suffering of Christ.**

But we Christians would rather keep on arguing, “*Such a particular day had been appointed for the Jewish church; as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day. But this does not prove, but that the same words refer to another appointed seventh day, now in the Christian church.*”

The logic behind such excuses is pathetic: “*The same words refer to another appointed seventh day*”; “*The words of the fourth command may oblige the Church ... to observe different appointed seventh days*”? What could one say about the **impossible** thing Edwards supposes here, that “*the same words refer to another day*”? What could one say about the **even more impossible** thing Edwards supposes here, that “*the same words*” that “*refer to ...*” the **Seventh** Day of the week, “*refer to ... another seventh day* (of the week)?” But that is nothing compared to Edwards’ **emphatic** supposition here, “*that the same words refer to another appointed seventh day*”. ONLY ONE DAY, THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE WEEK, ever was “**appointed**” by God for *holy purpose and use*. It was, **1**, “**appointed**”, **2**, “**seventh**”, **3**, “**day**” which is the same thing as saying it was “**The** Seventh Day” – the demonstrative article, and “**The** Seventh Day **of the week**”. “Concerning”, **NO** OTHER DAY but, “the Seventh Day (of the week)”, God **ever** “spoke, **thus**” (Hb.4:4)! “**Thus**” refers to God’s “speaking” as being his **rest** on “the Seventh Day”. God never “spoke” – His speaking being His doing and His doing

being to “rest”, of another day, “**thus**”. God in and by and through **His Rest** of and on the Seventh Day, “**spoke** concerning the Seventh Day”. That, **essentially**, means God concerning the Sabbath Day spoke through **Christ**. That is how God “**appointed**” **of the week, the** “Seventh Day”, “**Sabbath**”!

“The words of the fourth command may oblige the church, under different dispensations, to observe different appointed seventh days, as well as the fifth command may oblige, different persons to honour different fathers and mothers”

– which of course is untrue! “*Different fathers and mothers*” are still OUR *fathers and mothers* or still THE *fathers and mothers*. It still is the honouring of **them** and still the **honouring** of them and not their **dishonouring**! But to “*appoint*” a “*different*” “*day*” in the place of the hallowed and blessed one – which is The Seventh Day – necessarily implies the dishonouring of it and the honouring in its place of another and “*different*” day – which in all eternity could not be a “*different ... seventh day*”. Then to say “*The words of the fourth command may oblige the church ... to observe different appointed seventh days*” is more like saying the Commandment that says man should be faithful means he may be faithful to different women!

“The Christian Sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish Sabbath; because it is kept after six days of labour as well as that; it is the seventh, reckoning from the beginning of our first working-day, as well as that was the seventh from the beginning of their first working day. All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God’s rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that. It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.”

The naming of the days of the week is inspired. The week as such is a divine division of days – we shall find it nowhere explained or commanded but in God’s Word. The week is no natural division of time or days or seasonal cycles. The week originates from God’s creation of seven days for His creation-work; it originates from God’s “*will and mind*”. Then Inspiration called the days of creation-week by their **count** ... **except the Seventh**. God, **as His act of the creation of it**, called the Seventh Day of the week blessed and sanctified because in it in finishing all His works He created, He rested. **God’s ultimate work of creation was His work of resting**, and with this act of His, God honoured the Seventh Day and like it, no other. It is a grave and sorry *matter by what*

names the days are called by man: that he forgets its Creator and calls the days after strange gods – also the Sabbath of the LORD thy God he calls after a strange god. Then to crown his blasphemy, man calls the chief of false god’s day the Lord’s Day! *It for man would have been all one as to this argument only if the Sabbath’s remembrance is scorned and a day of his own fancy honoured.*

The **true Christian Sabbath**, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish Sabbath, but the resemblance starts where *the seventh day* starts and ends where *the seventh day* ends. “*The sense of the fourth command*” is a **Christian “sense”**; while the “*Jewish Sabbath*” does not capture “*the sense of the fourth command*”. “*The sense of the fourth command*” **also** means the Sabbath is the Seventh Day of the week, but it primarily means God’s “**finishing**” – which He accomplishes **only in Jesus Christ**. The Seventh Day of the week is “*Christian*”, and not “*Jewish*”.

Trying to interpret Edwards’ remark in a positive way is almost impossible because the whole and intent thereof as well as the reason Edwards gives for his claim are **so false**. Edwards namely asserts, “*The Christian Sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command is ... the seventh day ... because it is kept after six days of labour ... reckoning from the beginning of our first working-day.*” We have already answered this falsity; in fact, Edwards himself has elaborately explained how God before He gave the Law, explained which day the Seventh of the week was. Now he takes a **false starting-point**, making of **man’s** attainment the measure-stick. The Seventh Day “*in the sense of the fourth command*” though, is the seventh **in the dispensations of God**. It is The Seventh Day “because in it **God** ...”! Because in it God’s **Rest** in Truth is God’s Ultimate **Act of work** in that “**in it, God, finished**”! “**God Finished all** ...” is the **Name of Jesus Christ** in verbal form, written “**in the Seventh Day**”. “**God Finished all** ...” is the Name of Jesus Christ “engraved” **in resurrection from the dead**: “**the Beginning** of the Creation of God”! “**God Finished all** ...” is the Name of Jesus Christ “**THUS SPOKEN**” **in deed of God** and the Day was “The Seventh Day” in **God’s** “reckoning”!

This Day in God’s Word “*is*” NOT “*the seventh day*”, is NOT “*kept*” “*the seventh day*”, and its “*reckoning*” is NOT “*the seventh day*” “*in the sense of*”, or, **according to** “*our working*” “*six days*”, or, **according to** “*their working*” “*six days*”.

“*All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God’s rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that.*”

Where is such confusion found in Scripture? Then we would be able to fathom the depths of anarchy of this statement.

“*The seven days began from the day after God’s rest from the creation*”. God’s rest not so much was a cessation **from** His act of creating; it rather was God’s Rest **of** His act of creating. **God’s Rest was God’s creation** as much as the physical realm of things created were. That divine Rest so blessed and sanctified by Himself and for Himself was God’s accomplishment or “finishing” in the realm of **spiritual** things. It was an enjoyment of God **within Himself** of being the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. God rested in that He founded peace, entered into covenant and triumphed through grace: Thus “the Sabbath was made” – “Sabbath of the LORD thy God”, “made for man”! Only “*from the day after God’s rest*” – after “the Seventh Day” of **His** having entered into **Covenant relationship** “in Sabbath’s-time”, “*the seven days began*” as perpetual “weekly” cycle of days. From God’s Sabbath-rest, man may step into his own labour, as Karl Barth said. Man would have been at a total loss, were he to try and step into his own labour from his own labour.

Why would the seven days (week) **formerly** have begun from the day after **God’s rest** which is the first of man’s labour, but **now they begin the day after that**, in other words, now they begin Mondays? It is immaterial, answers Edwards! “*It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.*”

So what does all this help Sunday-sacredness? What would God have done to the Israelites if they were to argue about his institution of the Seventh Day Sabbath in like manner?

“*Therefore, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath, there is no change from the fourth command; but the change is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their working days.*” Edwards says “*the change (from the fourth command) is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their (the Jews’) working days*”.

How is it possible to say *by the institution of Sunday the First Day as “Christian Sabbath” there is no change from the fourth command*? It simply isn’t true. The Fourth Commandment **is, changed**, in that now – according to Edwards and the whole Church – not the Seventh Day of the week but the First Day of the week should be observed holy. Whether “*from the fourth command*” or “*from another law*”, Edwards herewith **admits change** of the Fourth Command and belies everything of the

much he has to say about its immutability and perpetuity. And that claimed change is necessitated by “by the institution of the Christian Sabbath”; the “institution” of **Sunday**-sacredness and **Sunday**-keeping caused the Fourth Commandment’s change. And the *change* is **contrary** to the Fourth Commandment. Don’t let us fool ourselves – this it implies and this in so many words states.

What Edwards **continues** to say, **unless** appreciated **independent** of his introductory lines and as pertaining the **Seventh** Day Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, can only be **worthless** apologetics: “So that those words of the fourth command, viz. “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God :” afford no objection against that which is called the Christian Sabbath – being the Seventh Day Sabbath ; for these words remain in full force. Neither does any just objection arise from the words following, viz. “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.” These words are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh, because God has set us the example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time. What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is because God worked six days and rested the seventh.”

Notice how **subtly** Edwards detracts attention from the **distinction** principally intended by these words of the fourth command. “What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh ... day ...”, he asks instead of to ask, What is the reason that Christians rest The Seventh Day? His question, “What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day?”, is **beside the point**. The matter of the Fourth Commandment – **that which is principally intended** by it, is **not** whether a seven-days-cycle or a six-days-cycle or whatever “at a time” should determine the day of worship for Christians. **That which is principally intended** by the Fourth Commandment takes the **weekly day-cycle of seven days** for granted while it takes for granted **God’s creative deeds** in its determining, and **on the basis of the assumption**, determines **which** of the seven days **of the week** man should keep “holy unto the LORD”. “Because God worked six days and rested the seventh”, the Seventh Day is **thus revealed** the last and not the first day of the week!

If the words of the Fourth Commandment, “*Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*”, **afforded no objection** against **Sunday** being called the *Christian Sabbath*, the force of them is farcical and the God who spoke them, blasphemed.

“*By the institution of the Christian Sabbath there is no change from the fourth command*”, says Edwards. “*The change is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their working days*”, says he. In more modern English, “*The change originated in another law*”. **What other law is this?** Edwards describes it as the “*law ... which determined the beginning and ending of their (the Jews’) working days*”. But the Law is based on **God’s** works and resting – not on the Jews’! And that Law, **to the recurrence of The Seventh Day being the Day-of-God’s-Work-of-Rest – not** to the recurrence of the First Day of the week, “*determined the beginning and ending of the Jews’ working days*”! So those words of the Fourth commandment, viz. “*Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God*” ... afford **every** objection against that which is **called** the *Christian Sabbath* but in **truth** is pagan and idolatrous and the work of man – that in essence, is Jewish and not Christian.

“*These words ... “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it” ... are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the Christian Sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them*” ... which principally, wholly and essentially **is** the Sabbath – “intended”, “**Christian**”!

Any reader will of course know that by “*the Christian Sabbath*”, Edwards means the **Sunday** and not the Seventh Day of the week Sabbath as **we** here suppose it “*intended*”. Edwards’ statement, that by the institution of the **Sunday** these words “*are not made insignificant to Christians, but still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them*”, is **false**. It is false, because **that which is principally intended by the words of the Fourth Commandment is not** to designate the Sunday as “*the Christian Sabbath*”, but the **Seventh** Day (of the week) as “*the Christian Sabbath*”.

Edwards’ claim for Sunday is false, especially because of that one word of his, “*principally*”. By using this word, Edwards again **divides** the Law into different things, into whatever is “*principally intended*” or **unchangeable** (“*natural*”), and whatever is **not** “*principally intended*” or **changeable** (“*moral*”). (Remember, Edwards uses the thought-patterns of

his times.) “These words ... still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them” – which is to say they are valid **for Christians** to their fullest and simplest meaning. Three of “these words” of the Commandment are, **“The Seventh Day”**; and if *these words still remain in full force*, so does **the reality of the concept** “intended by them”, namely, **the Sabbath Day**.

“These words ... (“Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God”) were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh, because God has set us the example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time.”

The words Edwards refers to – “Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God”, are not the “reason” and “give us” **no** “reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh”. “These words” are man’s **duty**. The “reason” for our performing this duty is **God’s doing** and God’s commanding us to so do.

The “**reason given us**” is not **why** we should **work**, but **why** we should **Rest**. And the “**command**” given us **because of this reason** (God’s doing and God’s commanding us), is **when** in relation to **the week as God’s intitution of day-cycles** we should work and **when** in relation to **the week as God’s intitution of day-cycles** we should rest.

The *full force* as to that which is *principally intended by these words*, “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it”, is this: *‘Mind your own business o man during the week of six days **BACAUSE the Seventh Day of the week is God’s Day of Sabbath Rest** and not your working day; **then** you must stop **your** business and attend to that of **God!**’* *“Taken so, (these words) remain still in as much force **as ever they were**. **This, is the reason still, as much, as ever it was**”. And what Edwards says **more**, he says **in defiance of truth**.*

As **Edwards** takes “*these words*” to mean, “*but six days at a time*”, they **never** were in force, and as to the reason **he** gives, they as *much as never, were in force* – What **is the reason that Christians** should **still rest The Seventh Day by name, and not every seventh day by whim**, nor every eighth, or ninth, or tenth **though nameless day?** *The reason still, as much as ever it was, why we must work six days and **The Seventh Day** must rest, “**is because God worked six days and rested the seventh ... because God has set us the example**”* – to say it in Edwards’ **own** words.

*“It is true, these words **did** carry something further in their meaning”* than merely that “*we may work but six days at a time*”. *“It is true, these words **did** carry something further”*, says he, “*as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of Christ: it was then also **intended by them, that the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation. But this is no objection to the supposition, that the words, as they relate to us, do not import all that they did**, (= “used to”) as they related to the **Jews. For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments, which are known and allowed not to be of the same import, as they relate to us, and as they related to the Jews, viz. these words, in the preface to the ten commands, “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”*** – *These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all to whom the commandments themselves are spoken; for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments. But they do not now remain in all the signification which they had* (= used to have), *as they respected the Jews. For we never were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, except in a mystical sense. – The same may be said of those words which are inserted in the commandments themselves, Deut. v. 15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.”*

First, Edwards claims, “*The words of the Fourth Commandment), as they relate to us, do not import all that they did as they related to the Jews.*” He then claims as **reason** for his saying so: “*For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments.*” According to Edwards **the Law itself provides the contradiction of itself!**

Edwards unambiguously **concedes**, “*It is true, these words (“Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God”), did carry something further in their meaning*”. But he **qualifies** his concession, “*as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of Christ: it was then also intended by them, that the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation.*” Not the **whole** Law; **only** “*these words*”, “*the seventh day*”! “*They do not now remain in all the signification which they had, as they respected the Jews*”.

“*To the Jews*”, and “*then*” – even “*to the church*” says Edwards. Whether “*before the coming of Christ*” or not, “*to the church*” it was, and to the Church “*these words*” **meant what they say: “the seventh day”**.

“As they relate to us” (Christians), they “do not import all that they did, as they related to the Jews” according to Edwards!

How could Edwards contradict himself so hopelessly? He explains, “... For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments ...”, “... viz. these words, in the preface to the ten commands, “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage””. “These, ... are other words ... known and allowed not to be of the same import ...” as “the ten commandments”: **they are not the Law!** They are not the Law not even “... as they related to the Jews”!

This Edwards says despite his earlier plea, that because “it is not to be thought that Christ ever abolished any command of the ten; but that there is the complete number ten yet, and will be to the end of the world”; “This command (the Fourth), as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation, at least, as to the substance of it, as is intimated by its being engraven on the tables of stone”. (Weren’t the words “The Seventh Day”, as well as this “preface” and insertion, “engraven on the tables of stone”?) In his first sermon, “the substance of it” – that which is basic to the Law “in all the signification (it) had” – lay **outside** the words “the Seventh Day”. In his second sermon, “the substance of it” does **not** lie **in** the “complete” Law, not in “the rest” of it that is “engraven on the tables”. Eventually **nothing** of the Law is left that is of “substance”.

What Edwards so denies, the Law’s “substance”, contained in “the preface to the ten commands”, and included “with the ten commandments”, is **God’s very reason** for its institution! “Deut. v. 15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day”.” “The words” of **this basic principle** of the Law **and** its institution, despite being “inserted in the commandments themselves”, are “**not ... of the same import**” as “the commandments themselves” – strange reasoning! “These words ... are known and allowed not to be of the same import as they relate to us (Christians)”. “As to the substance of (the words)”, “the Seventh Day” “the Fourth in Command”, Edwards says, **precisely the same** applies!

As to the Law’s substantial or intrinsic “reason” – especially since it is the intrinsic “reason” of the Law of the God of love, the intrinsic “reason” of the Redeemer’s Law – **the Law without “these words”**, is **incomplete** and **null and void!** And likewise, **the Law without** its **specifications and requirements** regarding its basic and intrinsic “reason” and “substance” – especially since these reflect the intrinsic **quality and nature** of the Law as the Law of the loving and

saving God – the Law without “the words” regarding its **specifications and requirements**, is **incomplete** and **null and void!**

Edwards **dissects the Law** to suit his own designs. He and fellow Law-surgeons leave us with just some scraped ligaments without skeleton or muscle – with no body at all.

But as the words of the Law pertain to **men of all ages** – to the “Church”, as Edwards says, “the church” even of “before the coming of Christ” – they are **God’s one** Word and Law – **all and every word** of it are **God’s**. God called the **whole** Law, “These Ten Words”. All its words are so of the **same** value and “import” they constitute **one** “covenant”. **All** the words of or in the Law – not only some of them – **are** the Law. And they are **Law** because they are **God’s** Word “spoken” by **Him**. They are **Law** because they **cognitively verbalise** “God’s will and mind”. Not even the written Law can fathom or express “God’s will and mind” properly, because the words of it are **human** “mind”. Some think because the wording of God’s Law is human they may make of it human “will” as well! The whole Law and every word of it must cognitively verbalise “God’s will and mind” to his Church as clearly, as fully and as precisely as is possible - only in human words for man to be able to understand. To say certain of its words are alterable, is the opposite of Christ’ verdict that not a iota of the Law shall be lost or changed. The Law cannot be amputated of this or that and be provided with artificial limbs and organs instead.

Because it is **God the Redeemer** who speaks in the Law – **even in that first edition connected with creation** – the Law is **not dividable** – certain words of it being “Law” and other words of it being “Gospel”. The words written upon those tables of stone were the ten commandments – they contain **no** “other” words, **no** “preface to” it merely, that not **also** is **the Law**. The Law is words known and allowed to be of the same import, and, of the same import as they relate to us, as they related to the Jews – the Law that is summed up in **one word**, “To love God” above all and one’s neighbour as oneself”!

Why this whole business of tearing God’s Law apart? Why this preoccupation with such a task? Why this scurrying about? Only and ever for this single little phrase that like a small prickle in one’s apparel gets unbearably irritating. Would that the Church looked to Jesus Christ, and saw Him and **what He “made the Sabbath for”!** Would that the Church could see the Sabbath serve its Lord, and serve His People to serve the Master and his praises. Would that the Church could see the Sabbath like a fortress in the Victor’s war on sin and death! Look to Jesus Christ, and see Him and **what He “made the Sabbath for”!** It would have been the end of controversy and the beginning of the Sabbath’s enjoyment! Like Israel of old the People would sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb,

Sabbath for Sabbath, for it is the New Earth and Jesus' Kingdom and rule! We by the mighty victory of our King stand in that Kingdom "today"! "Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" Where is the People of that Kingdom if not there on the Day of **Jesus' Victory**, Worship and Rest? ... It is a vanquished and vanished People – a non-entity! So important is the Sabbath Day.

"As they were spoken to the Jews ... (the words of the Command) then ... intended ... that **the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation**", says Edwards with emphasis on "**creation**" meaning to detract the attention from this **second** giving of the Law he actually is busying himself with – that gives as **reason** for the **Seventh Day's** institution, exactly the **same** reason given for its **first** giving. Its "**preface**" – that **God is Redeemer of his People** as He is **Redeemer of creation**, is the **whole** Law's. Its "**preface**" or introduction is its **explanation** – as of the second so of the first "edition"! It means "**the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation**" as well as of the work of **redemption** – **final** redemption in and through **Jesus Christ**, in and through **resurrection** from the dead.

"**The seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation**", which was **God's "work"** commemorated – "his works He **made**" or "**did**" – "**works**" that far exceed the creation of **matter**, of worlds and heavens and seas "and all that in them is". **These** were the **subject** that "were finished" the **Sixth Day** (Gen.1:31, the **passive** voice!), and in themselves these were found by God to be "very good" yet in **themselves, ever, in-"completed" and un-"finished"**! These universes that in themselves "were finished", **lacked** the "**finishing**" of which **God** would be the subject – these lacked the **blessing**, the **sanctity**, the **rest** and the **finishing** of which **God** is the **subject** – the **Doer** or **Creator**; these lacked God's **Sabbath-Deed** or **Sabbath-Work** : His **Sabbath-Rest**, of the **Seventh Day!** (Gen.2:1-3, the **active** voice and God the Subject!) God's "works" – God's "**creation**" – included that **Blessing** and that **Sanctity**, that **Finishing** and that **Rest** **Who** "is the Beginning of the creation of God" – as John lets speak **Jesus Christ** "the Amen, the faithful and true witness of the creation of God".

Creation's real beginning – its **divine**-beginning – isn't found in the first six days of God's work, but in the work of God of the **Seventh Day** – in God's **REST!** (God also says He on the Seventh Day "was revived again" and in **God's** "refreshing" all his works find **their** refreshing, their new creation and their new beginning – their "**rest**".) Creation's **pure being**, or existence *per se*, amounts to nihilism. The Sabbath is out of place in nihilism and deism; it finds its only niche in the Covenant of Grace!

""I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." – These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all to whom the commandments themselves are spoken; for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments."

These words are spoken as the very "**substance**" of the commandments. They are the substance of the **first** giving of the Law, the **creation**-Ten Commandments. It shows the **redemption** of God forms the basis and the end of God's Laws – **it sees Christ already**. The **Fourth** Commandment also.

The "**other** words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments, ... are **known and allowed not to be of the same import, as they relate to us, ... as they related to the Jews**", says Edwards. So eventually there must remain **nothing** of the Law that "**relates to us**" seeing also the **specifics** of the Law do not "**relate to us**"! Nevertheless Edwards would not allow that! He on the contrary would insist on the whole Law's perpetual obligation. And he could not tell us **WHY** these words of the "**preface**" would **not relate to us as they related to the Jews** because he then would have had to surrender all and any **reason** for the Law **and** its **particular** obligations resting upon the Church. So that all his arguments in all their strength against the Christian Sabbath according to the Fourth Commandment The Seventh Day of the week, come to nothing.

Edwards continues to kick against the pricks, "That the ancient church was commanded to keep a seventh day in commemoration of the work of creation, is an argument for the keeping of a weekly Sabbath in commemoration of the work of redemption, and not any reason against it."

The ancient church was NEVER commanded to keep "a seventh day", and commemoration of the work of redemption NEVER was an argument for the keeping of "a weekly Sabbath". In fact, the Law and specifically the Fourth Commandment was the **only reason against** man's arbitrary deciding upon and keeping of "a seventh day" **that IS not the day of God's finishing of creation and redemption, The Seventh Day Sabbath**. In other words, the Law and specifically the Fourth Commandment only permits The Seventh Day of the week for the duties of rest and the keeping of the Sabbath Day in the sense of worship, and six days **that ARE not the day of God's finishing of creation and redemption** for man's other duties. No other authority **but this the Law** which God spoke, raises an argument against the keeping of "a seventh day" which is immaterial and to argument **could** have been Wednesday ... but **must** be Sunday.

"We read in Scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command are to be taken as of the same force to those who belong to the new creation, with respect to that new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to that. We read, That "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and the church of old were to commemorate that work. But when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, those that belong to this new heaven and new earth, by a like reason, are to commemorate the creation of their heaven and earth.

The Scriptures teach us to look upon the old creation as destroyed, and as it were annihilated by sin; or, as being reduced to a chaos again, without form and void, as it was at first. Jer. iv. 22,23. "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light!" i. e. they were reduced to the same state in which they were at first; the earth was without form and void, and there was no light, but darkness was upon the face of the deep. The Scriptures further teach us to call the gospel-restoration and redemption, a creation of a new heaven and a new earth; Isa. lxx. 17,18. "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy." And Isa.li. 16. "And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." And chap. lxvi. 22. "For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make," &c. – In these places we are not only told of a new creation, or new heavens and a new earth, but we are told what is meant by it, viz. The gospel renovation, the making of Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; saying unto Zion, "Thou art my people," &c. The prophet, in all these places, is prophesying of the gospel-redemption."

"The prophet, in all these places, is prophesying of the gospel-redemption" while he supposes, expects and mentions "the Seventh Day Sabbath", the "Holy (day)" of God as called, and "the Sabbath of the LORD your God". Unchangeable as God is, the Sabbath being His, is unchangeable. So is this Day "The Seventh Day" "spoken" of by Him "in the Son ... in these last days": through resurrection from the dead!

"The gospel-state is everywhere (in the Old Testament) spoken of as a renewed state of things, wherein old things are passed away, and all things become new: we are said to be created unto Christ Jesus unto good works: all things are restored and reconciled whether in heaven or in earth, and God has caused light to shine out of darkness, as he did at the beginning ...".

The gospel-state is everywhere in the Old Testament spoken of. The Old Testament nowhere speaks of anything that does not regard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament testifies of Him or it as well as the New Testament make up a big and thick but wasted book.

"All things become new". As "we are said to be created unto Christ Jesus unto good works" so also this thing The Sabbath Day among "all things" "made" or "created", is said to be "made", or "become": "new", "created unto Christ Jesus unto good works". Herein are the whole and only **reason** for, as well as the whole and only **purpose** of, the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: "The Sabbath was made for Man" = "unto Christ Jesus" = "unto good works" = for the "good" or saving works of God in Christ. **Then**, and only then the Sabbath is for "man", i.e., "for the People of God" to "enter into God's Rest" in Jesus Christ: "**But we who belong to the gospel-church, belong to the new creation; and therefore there seems to be at least as much reason, that we should commemorate the work of this creation, as that the members of the ancient Jewish church should commemorate the work of the old creation.**"

The Sabbath commemorates the Incarnation of the coming God. In rising from the dead incarnate "incorruptable", exalted and glorified, the Sabbath commemorates "**God with us**". "Behold, the Tabernacle of God with man" – **Jesus Christ Resurrected!** "He will dwell with them, and they shall be His People, indeed God Himself shall be with them, their God!" This is God's Sabbath Rest. The Tabernacle of God declares, "The Son of Man is Lord indeed of the Sabbath Day" ... the Sabbath is for God's People to enter into **Rest!** "For God shall wipe away their tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away; for He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new ... It is done, I am First and I am Last, the Beginning and the End ... the Fountain of the water of Life" ... ("for man").

This is **the whole, the sole and the soul**-significance of God's instituting of the Seventh Day Sabbath! God did NOT "make" the Sabbath for "man" GENERALLY, or for man's general "good" – for material prosperity or generosity. The Sabbath is neither humanistic nor humanitarian. God made the Sabbath unto His **own** Rest which is Jesus Christ, **the Man** "for / unto" Whom and in Whom "man" as **the Body of Christ the Church** exclusively, by faith, partakes of God's Rest.

"There is another thing which confirms it, that **the fourth command teaches God's resting from the new creation, as well as from the old: which is that the Scriptures expressly speak of the one, as parallel with the other, i. e. Christ's resting from the work of redemption, is expressly spoken of as being parallel with God's resting from the work**

of creation. Heb. iv. 10. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Not only are "**Christ's** resting" and "**God's** resting", "**parallel**". Christ's work of **redemption is the completion** of the **creation** of God. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and **to finish His work**", Jn.4:34. "**Hitherto** works my Father and hitherto do I work", Jn.5:17, i.e., 'Unto this **end**, this **completion** do we both work'. Only in **Jesus Christ** is creation "finished"; and only in Him in **resurrection** from the dead! Here are the Father and the Son's "parallel" "works": "Because the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself does, He indeed will show Him **greater** works than these – wonderful works! For as the Father **raises up the dead and quickens HIM**, even so He the Son quickens whom He will." **This**, is "**to finish God the Creator's work**".

Do not miss that other "**parallel**" **ever present** in this Finishing, **ever present** with "the Amen of the creation of God" in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead. Do not miss **the Day** of its accomplishment: "For God concerning **The Seventh Day** thus spoke: God indeed **the Seventh Day rested** from all His works". It means God **thus finishing**, "**rested**" – and respecting **The Seventh Day** we heard this word of God spoken – respecting no other day did we hear it "on this wise", "spoken"!

Now, **Christ rested from his works when he rose from the dead NOT, on the first day of the week**, but in the day "**God finished**". **When** he rose from the dead "**in Sabbath's-time**", **then** he finished his work of redemption ; his humiliation was **then** at an end; he **then** rested, and was refreshed.

"When it is said, "There remaineth a rest to the people of God" in the original, it is, a sabbatism, or the keeping of a Sabbath: and **this reason is given for it**, "For he that entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his." – These three things at least we are taught by these words:

"(1.) To look upon Christ's rest from his work of redemption, as parallel with God's rest from the work of creation; for they are expressly compared together, as parallel one with the other.

"(2.) They are spoken of as parallel, particularly in this respect, viz. The relation which they both have to the keeping of a Sabbath among God's people, or with respect to the influence which these two rests have, as to sabbatizing in the church of God: for it is expressly with respect to this that they are compared together. Here is an evident reference to God's blessing and hallowing the day of his rest from the creation to be a Sabbath, and appointing a Sabbath of rest in imitation of him. For the apostle is speaking of this, ver. 4. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works."

"Thus far is evident; whatever the apostle has respect to ... whether it be a **weekly sabbatizing on earth** or a sabbatizing in heaven. ... It is evident in these words, that the preference is given to the latter rest, viz. **The rest of our Saviour from his works**, with respect to **the influence it should have, or relation it bears, to the sabbatizing of the people of God, now under the gospel**, evidently implied in the expression, "There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God. For he that entered into his rest," &c."

"For, in this expression, There remaineth, it is intimated that the old sabbatism appointed in remembrance of God's rest from the work of creation, does not remain, but ceases; and that this new rest, in commemoration of Christ's resting from his works, remains in the room of it."

This there is no indication to the contrary that it should be understood as referring to "the Seventh Day" before mentioned in the Sermon (4:4). If this statement could be understood **without** Edwards' supposition that the **Sunday** should be regarded as "**this new rest**", it would be an eulogy on the Gospel-nature of the New Testament **Sabbath**(-Seventh Day). But that is not Edwards' idea. Edwards' true idea **spoils** every bit of truth. "**The rest of our Saviour from his works with respect to the influence it should have, or relation it bears, to the sabbatizing of the people of God**", according to Edwards, "**evidently implies**" **the Church should keep Sunday sacred** for the reason of Jesus' resurrection (allegedly) on it. Keeping in mind **Edwards' "intimation"** (It's not mine!), this paragraph of his strictly could only mean "**the old sabbatism appointed in remembrance of God's rest from the work of creation**" – The Seventh Day Sabbath – "**does not remain, but ceases; and that this new rest**" – the Sunday – "**in commemoration of Christ's resting from his works**" – **through resurrection from the dead** – "**remains in the room of it** (The Seventh Day Sabbath)". **But**, if read **purely** with the meaning of "**all things**" newly "**created unto Christ Jesus**", this paragraph conveys an **opposite** impression as to what Edwards **intended** it to convey; it then implies the **Seventh Day as Christian Sabbath** and the **renewal** and confirmation of the **Seventh Day Sabbath** through and in Jesus Christ just as "**all things**" or "**all the works of God**" are through renewal confirmed through and in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead.

Edwards says nothing new or additional to what he has already said. He simply repeats the thing "**intimated**" even more complicated than before.

It would have been **true and purposeful** though to have said that in the expression, "**There remaineth ...**", is intimated that the **old reason** for a keeping of the Sabbath appointed in remembrance of God's rest

from His work of creation, does not remain, **but ceases** – it being completely absorbed in and taken up **by its fulfilment in Jesus’ resurrection**. It would have been true and purposeful to have said, that it is intimated there, that there remains in the room of that **proleptic**, still unfulfilled and unrealised yet divinely promised and prophesied rest, this **new** rest in commemoration of **Christ’s fulfilment**, realisation and divine confirmation **through resurrection** from the dead. The Seventh Day of God’s **speaking** in Christ, in Christ became the Day of God’s **doing** in Christ. It is the old day “*refreshed*” as it is the God of old who is “*refreshed*”. *The old sabbatism – man’s old “keeping of the Sabbath” – “does not remain, but ceases”*; but the **Sabbath** of creation – the Sabbath of **God’s doing** – for ever remains; it ceases not. For man, it became **a new keeping** of the Sabbath because of its **new reason** for keeping – **the new creation** of God’s doing **in Jesus Christ**.

“The Holy Ghost has implicitly told us, that the Sabbath which was instituted in commemoration of the old creation, should not be kept in gospel-times. Isa. lxxv. 17,16. There we are told, that when God should create new heavens and a new earth, the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind. If this be so, it is not to be supposed, that we are to keep a seventh part of time, on purpose to remember it, and call it to mind.”

Edwards refers to verses 17 and 16 in that order. Now read verse 18, “But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy”. God creates the very former City and the very former People a rejoicing! God’s creating them a rejoicing means He creates this new thing in remembrance of the former things! To generalise the meaning of verse 17 is inadmissible. “To be remembered” exactly means “to be commemorated / celebrated by remembrance”. The saved on the New Earth shall ever “remember” or “celebrate” the former things of how they were saved from death. “Not to remember” does not mean to suffer from amnesia. It means “not to be honoured in memory” – which **implies remembrance!** To live under the new dispensation is to live in remembrance of God’s mercies in Christ. To remember this and to remember in this wise means the opposite of to forget all former things. The old things take on new meaning in view of the salvation wrought in Christ! By the former or old, Isaiah means the bad and the sad things. Even these he exactly calls to mind again, comparing them with the good and the joyful things that belong to the new earth and new heavens. Our very joy of eternity will be our remembering the tragic and the painful things we were saved and redeemed from through Jesus Christ. That is what Isaiah means – that we shall forget the former **in remembrance of it** and in **celebration** of

God’s victory – over **these the former things**. That is why God commands His **saved** People, “**Remember** the Sabbath Day ...”. Isaiah indeed sees the remembrance of the Sabbath as life-pulse of the new earth, 66:22-23!

And I believe Edwards of all men would agree. Yet because of the cause he serves in this place, he would not. In fact, says he, “*If this be so, it is not to be supposed, that we are to keep a seventh part of time, on purpose to remember it, and call it to mind.*” Edwards realises he has gone too far and against the intentions of the Scripture. So **he protests against his own conclusion** that Isaiah 65:17 and 16 say **the Sabbath should not be remembered under the Gospel** and quickly offers a false alternative, namely that “*we are to keep a seventh part of time*” (... as long as it is not the Seventh Day and as long as it is the First Day of the week).

*“Let us understand this which way we will it will not be well consistent with the keeping of **one day in seven, in the gospel-church, principally for the remembrance and calling to mind of the old creation ...**”*. It isn’t proper for the Christian Church to keep the Seventh Day to remember creation, Edwards in effect says. And he says that for the Christian Church to keep the Seventh Day to remember creation will be inconsistent with Isaiah 65:17 and 16. Now I see no reason that the Christian Church could ever forget God’s “*old*” or “*former*” creation. In fact, to neglect it would be contrary the Church Confession of God’s creation, confessed every week, unfortunately not on the Sabbath created for the express purpose of “remembrance”, but on the Day of the Sun.

*“If the meaning of the place (Is.65:16-17) be only this, that the old creation shall not be remembered nor come into mind **in comparison with the new** (which implies thorough remembrance of the old) – that the new will be so much more remarkable and glorious, will so much more nearly concern us, so much more notice will be taken of it, and it will be thought so much more worthy to be remembered and commemorated, than the other (or old “creation”) will not be remembered, nor come into mind – it is impossible that it should be more to our purpose. For then (when the old creation is not remembered, nor comes into mind) hereby the Holy Ghost teaches us, that the Christian church has much more reason to commemorate the new creation than the old; inasmuch, that the old is worthy to be forgotten in comparison with it.”*

God does not require us to forget His first creation; He commands us to celebrate and commemorate it through keeping the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God. God commands His People would in His Sabbath Day see and understand **Jesus Christ**, and **in Jesus Christ** and in Him resurrected from the dead, would see and understand **creation**. It

is **as impossible** to understand and appreciate the new creation but in the light of the old as it is **impossible** to understand and appreciate the old creation but in the light of the new. **God's revelation is one**. Both Old and New are God's **Testament of Covenant** of Grace. The Christian especially shall remember the former things in that he shall know and observe whence he comes and whence by mercy he was delivered.

“And as the old creation was no more to be remembered, nor come into mind; so, in the following verse, the church is directed for ever to commemorate the new creation : “But be you glad, and rejoice for ever to that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy;” i. e. Though you forget the old, yet for ever to the end of the world, keep a remembrance of the New creation.”

What does God create a rejoicing? Jerusalem, the mother of us all! The old creation will and can only be remembered while a remembrance be kept of the New Creation! In the Acts anyone who entered into the fellowship of the New Creation first had to become a Jew, for God locked everybody behind the bars of being sinners in order for them to be set free according to the sure mercies of David ... **Remembrance upon remembrance constitute the rejoicing of the Gospel-redeemed**. The very word “Good News”, “Redemption”, “Salvation”, “New Creation” implies consciousness and conscience of the former things. And these former things are nothing but the redeeming revelation of the Creator through the Word through Whom He created! The very remembrance of the New Creation is an argument that the Sabbath was to be perpetual, and that the Israel of God were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt whether the Egypt of old or the Egypt of all times until Jesus comes again.

How unfortunate that Edwards chose the opposite, that *“It is an argument that the Jewish Sabbath was **not to be perpetual**, that the Jews were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt”*. If **this** were an argument against the Seventh Day Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, no nonsense could fail to be a reason against it. It is **gross contradiction** to assert, the fact that *the Jews were commanded to keep the Sabbath in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, is an argument that the Sabbath was not to be perpetual*. Not only does the Scriptures say the Sabbath was an **eternal covenant** of God with his people. The meaning of the Sabbath was unto a remembrance of God's deliverance – not unto a forgetting of it. Edwards calls the Sabbath according to the Fourth Commandment the Sabbath **of the LORD your God**”, *“the Jewish Sabbath”* – which is contrary the words and spirit of that Commandment God being the only Deliverer and therefore the Deliverer of both Jews and Gentiles – *under the Gospel*.

*“One reason why (the Sabbath) was instituted was, because God thus delivered them, as we are expressly told, Deut. v. 15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: **therefore** the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.” Now, can any person think, that God would have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every week, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?”*

All of a sudden Edwards has no doubts which day of the week the Seventh Day of the week according to the Fourth Commandment is! All of a sudden he is able to clearly discern that day from any other day when he hopes to hear some timid acclamations, *“Never!”* ...

*“Now, can any person think, that God would have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep **a day every week, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?**”* – which was no other than the Seventh Day of *every week!* Edwards would not acclaim this notion. Then would he acclaim if the Jews had **not** been delivered were they left to perish under the Egyptians? Would he celebrate the Sabbath to remember that? *Now, can any person NOT think, that God would have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every week, which was instituted in remembrance of His deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt? Can any person think **of any reason** that God **had not all the reason** to have **His People** from all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep **that very day every week**, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of them all **out of sin and death?** Can any person think the Jews' deliverance does not foreshadow God's **eternal** deliverance through **Jesus Christ**, seeing He through **Him** accomplished that *“deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?”* **But, can any person think** that God would have His People from all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every week, which He **never** instituted and which **never** stood in relation to a remembrance of **any** deliverance of his People wrought by Him?*

“Can any person think that God ... ?” **Who** would **not** think so? Is any man on par with God to tell Him what acceptable responsibility towards Him would be and what its reasonableness to man? Edwards could just as well have phrased his challenge thus: *“How could **God** think to have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every week, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?”* But how **could** God, because He so **did** think? Because He is God, and man is man. Certainly the person who beholding God's victory and himself experiencing that *deliverance from Egypt can think* that what God would have is such a gift of grace it surpasses his most

elevated thoughts.

*“The Holy Ghost has implicitly told us, that instituted memorials of the Jews’ deliverance from Egypt should be **no longer upheld** in gospel-times, Jer. xvi. 14, 15. The Holy Ghost, speaking of gospel-times, says, “Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them; and I will bring them again into their own land.” **They shall no more say, The Lord liveth that brought, etc., i. e. at least they shall keep up no more any public memorials of it.”***

*“They shall keep up no more any public memorials ...” No! Don’t change the subject! If the prophet says “it shall no more be said” that God lives and it be meant literally, it would mean God would then be dead. Stick to what the text says will “no more” be, and then find that what is **negated** stylistically, is **affirmed** effectively: *“Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt”*. In those “days” that would “come”, as Edwards says, in “*gospel-times*”, this very saying of the “*the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt*” shall be acclaimed **with greater meaning it ever had**, for it shall be acclaimed of its promised and confirming fulfilment in Jesus Christ. (I don’t mind the higher critics who won’t agree that the Gospel should be seen in Isaiah the book, and I am sure Edwards would agree on disagreeing with them.) I think Edwards totally against his character as a theologian spoke against his better judgement here – as almost throughout his sermons on the *Change and Perpetuity of the Sabbath*. And on the same subject many if not all of his colleagues too have spoken against their better judgement.*

“It shall no more be said, The Lord liveth” ... This negation is the strongest possible affirmation because then the LORD shall live among them Himself first by faith, then by seeing! Never again shall it **not** be said the Lord lives; never shall it be said as significantly as in the days that come, “*The Lord liveth!*”

The days Jeremiah prophecies of, directly “*speak*” of restoration of the Jews from the **Babylonian** captivity, and only by way of faith’s application – “*implicitly*” and by “*the Holy Ghost*” – “*speak*” of “*gospel-times*” – exactly the way the Law speak to the Israelites and then to peoples of after-times – to us, Christians. Jeremiah many times pertinently gives as reason for the Jews’ captivity their desecration and contempt of God’s Sabbath! But restoration of the People and **restoration** of “*that instituted memorials of ... deliverance*” – mainly the Sabbath Day – **were sure to come** and is spoken of as **present** or even as

past already so certain it would be! When it will no longer be necessary for the one to teach the other the LORD’s ways, He will live in their midst through faith and in the last day bodily. This prophecy “*implicitly*”, that is, by the working of the Holy Spirit, speaks of God’s **fullest realisation** of the Promise it contains. Edwards concludes that “*If there be a Sabbath kept up in gospel-times, as we have shown there must be, it is more just from these words to suppose, that it should be as a memorial of ... the redemption of Christ, and his bringing home the elect, not only from Judea, but from the north, and from all quarters of the world.*”

“If there be a Sabbath kept up in gospel-times, as there must be”, these words say more than their literal meaning. “It is more just from these words to suppose, that (the Sabbath) should be as a memorial of the redemption of Christ”!

*“– See Isa. xliii. 16-20”, “Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert ... to give drink to my people, my chosen.” Did not God do it? So we remember the former things **verily for His saying** “Remember **not!**” Verse 15, “I am LORD, your Holy One, Creator of Israel, your King”. Now “know the LORD” but don’t remember He is Creator of Israel? Now remember Him King but not how He is King? So also when one reads Is.63, take verses 11 to 14, “Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, his People ... Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the Shepherd of his flock, where He that put His Holy Spirit within him, He that led by the right hand of Moses, with glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an **everlasting** Name? That led them through the deep ... the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: **So didst thou** lead thy people, **to make thyself a glorious Name!**”*

Glorious in feat; glorious in being remembered! How could Israel His chosen forget their **King? Then could they forget** His “*deliverance from Egypt!*”

It plainly is untrue that “*at least they shall keep no more any public memorials of (their deliverance)*”. In fact, have we not read in **Is.63:14** that “He led them through the deep; the Spirit of the LORD **caused Israel to rest**: So didst thou lead thy people (through New Testament salvation), to make thyself a glorious Name!” – a glorious Name in the Worship and Teaching of it! And again in Dt.5: “**The reason why** you should remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy and should six days work and do all your work but the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God should not do any work ... **is that** in six days **the LORD** made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them, and **rested the Seventh Day**

and therefore and thereby the LORD **blessed it the Sabbath Day**, and **hallowed it the Sabbath Day**". (See p. 69)

Says Edwards, "*The Jewish Sabbath was kept on the day that the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. For we are told in Deut. v. 1.5. that this holy rest of the Sabbath was appointed in commemoration of their coming up out of Egypt. But the day of their going through the Red sea was the day of their coming up out of Egypt; for till then they were in the land of Egypt. The Red sea was the boundary of the land of Egypt. – The Scripture itself tells us, that the day on which they sung the song of Moses, was the day of their coming up out of the land of Egypt; Hosea ii. 15. "And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt;" referring plainly to that triumphant song which Moses and the children of Israel sang when they came up out of the Red sea*"

"It is no more than just to suppose, that God intended to intimate to us, that the Sabbath ought by Christians to be kept in commemoration of Christ's redemption, in that the Israelites were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt; because that deliverance out of Egypt is an evident, known, and allowed type of it. It was ordered of God, on purpose to represent it; every thing about that deliverance was typical of this redemption, and much is made of it, principally for this reason, because it is so remarkable a type of Christ's redemption. And it was but a shadow, the work in itself was nothing in comparison with the work of redemption. What is a petty redemption of one nation from a temporal bondage, to the eternal salvation of the whole church of the elect in all ages and nations, from eternal damnation, and the introduction of them, not into a temporal Canaan, but into heaven, into eternal glory and blessedness? Was that shadow so much to be commemorated, as that a day once a week was to be kept on the account of it; and shall not we much more commemorate that great and glorious work of which it was designed on purpose to be a shadow?"

Now what could anyone have said more or better? Does not Edwards here supply us with the ultimate answer why there remains a keeping of the Sabbath for the People of God while His Sabbath Day got so elevated and firmly established on the Rock which is Christ? The only problem is Edwards do not see or would not accept the bearing these words have on the Sabbath. He meant these words and reasons for Sunday's sake! But how could he? Sunday nowhere comes into the picture. Sunday is only **painted** into the picture of God's Deliverance or Passover through **translation**. Nowhere does the First Day of the week **surface** in God's Promises, or in the prophets' prophecies or in poets' poems or in historians' observations – **nowhere in God's Written**

Word! Then Sunday-arguments project it right where to expect the Seventh Day Sabbath!

Then also Edwards' further arguments (except for the word "*annexed*" near the end of these paragraphs) cannot be improved on, "*Besides, the words in the fourth commandment, which speak of the deliverance out of Egypt, can be of no significance unto us, unless they are to be interpreted of the gospel-redemption: but the words of the decalogue are spoken to all nations and ages. Therefore, as the words were spoken to the Jews, they referred to the type or shadow; as they are spoken to us, they are to be interpreted of the anti-type and substance. For the Egypt from which we under the gospel are redeemed, is the spiritual Egypt; the house of bondage from which we are redeemed, is a state of spiritual bondage. – Therefore the words, as spoken to us, are to be thus interpreted, Remember, thou wast a servant to sin and Satan, and the Lord thy God delivered thee from this bondage, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day.*"

As the words in the preface to the ten commandments, about the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, are interpreted in our catechism, and as they have respect to us, must be interpreted, of our spiritual redemption, so, by an exact identity of reason, must these words in Deuteronomy, annexed to the fourth command, be interpreted of the same gospel-redemption."

"... The Scripture tells us, that God appointed the Jewish Sabbath in commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from their task-masters, the Egyptians, and of their rest from their hard bondage and slavery under them; Deut. v. 14, 15. "That thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." But the day that the children of Israel were delivered from their task-masters and had rest from them, was the day when the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. They had no rest from them till then. For though they were before come forth on their journey to go out of the land of Egypt; yet they were pursued by the Egyptians, and were exceedingly perplexed and distressed. But on the morning that they came up out of the Red sea, they had complete and final deliverance; then they had full rest from their task-masters. Then God said to them, "The Egyptians which ye have seen this day, ye shall see no more for ever;" Exod. xiv, 13. Then they enjoyed a joyful day of rest, a day of refreshment. Then they sang the song of Moses; and on that day was their Sabbath of rest." (This was before the giving of the Law at Sinai. "The law was added.")

"But this coming up of the children of Israel out of the Red sea, was only a **type of the resurrection of Christ**. That people was the mystical body of Christ, and Moses was a great type of Christ himself; and besides, **on that day Christ went before** the children of Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, as their Saviour and Redeemer. On that morning Christ, in this pillar of cloud and fire, rose out of the Red sea, as out of great waters; which was a type of Christ's rising from a state of death, and from that great humiliation which he suffered in death.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is in Scripture represented by his coming up out of deep waters. So it is in Christ's resurrection, as represented by Jonah's coming out of the sea; Matt. xii. 40. It is also compared to a deliverance out of deep waters, Psalm lxix. 1, 2, 3, and verse 14, 15. These things are spoken of Christ, as is evident from this, that many things in this Psalm are in the New Testament expressly applied to Christ, (Compare verse 4 with John xv. 25. and ver. 9. with John ii. 17. and ver.2 with Matt xxvii. 34, 48. and Mark xv. 23. and John xix. 29. and ver. 2 with Rom.xi.9, 10. and ver.25 with Acts 1:20.) – Therefore, **as the Jewish Sabbath was appointed on the day on which the pillar of cloud and fire rose out of the Red sea, and on which Moses and the church, the mystical body of Christ, came up out of the same sea, which is a type of the resurrection of Christ; it is a great confirmation that the Christian Sabbath should be kept on the day of the rising of the real body of Christ from the grave, which is the anti-type. For surely the Scriptures have taught us, that the type should give way to the anti-type, and that the shadow should give way to the substance.**" See p. 325 Part 1 / 1

"I argue the same thing (that is, the day of salvation was the day of the Sabbath) **from Psalm cxviii. 22, 23, 24.** There we are taught, that **the day of Christ's resurrection is to be celebrated with holy joy by the church.** "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. **This is the day which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.**" "The Sabbath was made", said Christ. "Therefore", said He, "The Son of Man is Lord indeed of the Sabbath". (Mk.2:27-28)

"The stone spoken of is Christ; he was refused and rejected by the builders, especially when he was put to death. **That making him the head of the corner, which is the Lord's doing, and so marvellous in our eyes, is Christ's exaltation, which began with his resurrection.** While Christ lay in the grave, he lay as a stone cast away by the builders. But **when God raised him from the dead, then he became the head of the corner.** Thus it is evident the apostle interprets it, Acts iv. 10, 11. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," &c. –

"This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. – **And the day on which this was done, we are here taught, God has made to be the day of the rejoicing of the church.**"

The days – the first the day remembered in expectation, the second the day celebrated in remembrance – are one and the same, The Sabbath of the LORD your God, the day of His finishing, of His rest, of His blessing, and the day of His hallowing.

"The **abolition of the Jewish Sabbath seems to be intimated by this, that Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, lay buried on that day.** Christ, the author of the world, was the author of that work of creation of which the Jewish Sabbath was the memorial. **It was He that worked six days and rested the seventh day from all his works, and was refreshed. Yet he was holden in the chains of death on that day.** – God, who created the world, now in his second work of creation, did not follow his own example, if I may so speak; he **remained imprisoned in the grave on that day, and took another day to rest in.**"

Edwards is right: Jesus' resurrection is God's Rest; Jesus' imprisonment in the grave in the chains of death is NO rest of God's. Sabbatarians insisting Jesus' death on the Sabbath Day was his obedient and sanctifying resting of the Sabbath according to the Commandment have no idea what either the penalty for man's sin, or the prize for the Son of Man's victory over the penalty for man's sin, means. But Edwards errs when supposing the shame of Christ, to call the Day "*Jewish*", and when supposing Christ's exaltation, to call the Day holy. Edwards' thinking supposes the shame of Christ is shameful and **contaminates the day** of his shame with unholy shamefulness ... and therefore the Sabbath must be "*Jewish*"! Now it is true – so absolutely true – Christ "*suffered great humiliation in death*"; He indeed "*was holden in the chains of death on that day*" and "*remained imprisoned in the grave on that day*". but the Christian truth about it is Christ's "*great humiliation in death*" **is the glory of God**. ("Father, glorify thy Name! ... Now is the Son of Man glorified, now God is glorified in Him.") Christ's "*great humiliation in death*" is the one and most precious truth of our reconciliation with God so that indeed through Christ's "*great humiliation in death*" He became our righteousness! Nothing to be ashamed of and everything to partake in the sufferings of Christ for! Therefore do we his Church with Him and in Him "enter into His rest", the *katapausis* of God ("some really do enter!" – astonishing!) ... and for the People of God "remains" His *sabbatismos*!

Then because the Sabbath becomes this shameful, scandalous, "*Jewish*" thing, Edwards cannot see fit that through exactly its scandal it

should be blessed and hallowed with the rest of God, but must be "abolished"! This, in the scheme of man might seem the obvious path with the Sabbath Day; but not in God's scheme. No, God, for its very scandal – **the scandal of Jesus Christ in dying and in death** – would honour his Day of Rest – the Day of His Own Rest in Jesus Christ **through resurrection from the dead!** For the very reason of the Seventh Day's **honour of sharing** in the **humiliation** of Christ in **death**, God honoured the Seventh Day with the **honour of sharing** in the **exaltation** of Christ's in **resurrection** from the dead. Edwards **errs** seriously when he says *God, who created and saved the world in Jesus Christ "now in his second work of creation, did not follow his own example, but "took another day to rest in".* No, it is the **one** Day – "the **Sabbath** of the LORD thy God"!

The Sabbath was **never** "abolished"; Christ in resurrection from the dead established it and God with an eye to Christ in Resurrection created it. The Sabbath **never** was "Jewish". The Sabbath is God's and Christ's who through resurrection from the dead was exalted "**Lord ... of the Sabbath Day**": **LORD OF THE "LORDLY DAY = THE LORD'S DAY"**! (How could anyone ever call God's Day of Rest, "Jewish"?)

"*Christ the Lord of the Sabbath ... was **holden** in the chains of death on that day*" the Sabbath Day. That in fact was so – but what does it mean for the **First** Day, for Christ would have had to "*lay ... holden in the chains of death*" **also** on the First Day **IF, IT**, had been the day of His resurrection! But **because** the First Day was **not** allowed to share with Christ **in humiliation in death**, it also was not allowed the honour from Christ's **vanquishing death**.

Yes, Christ did "finish His work" **on the Sabbath Day** "as did God His": He finished in paying the **penalty** for sin **in full**, that is, He **finished** it off in **suffering death** ... on the **Sabbath** Day! But *Christ the Lord of the Sabbath was NOT holden in the chains of death on the Sabbath Day – He on the Sabbath Day, broke the chains of death through resurrection and exaltation to Life and Rest. He remained NOT imprisoned in the grave on that day.* As Israel on the Sabbath **went through** "the deep", so did Jesus Christ; as Israel on the Sabbath **entered** the promised land, so did Jesus Christ. He **took NO other day to rest in**. "**It was Sabbath's time** – fully – being afternoon before the First Day, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary left to have a look at the grave; **then** suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and flung the door-stone aside ..." **it was resurrection-time!** Christ, the author of the world, was the author of that work of creation of which God's Sabbath was the memorial. It was **He** that worked six days and rested the seventh day from all **his** works, it was

He that was refreshed – **it was Christ!** "**And the day on which this was done, we are here taught, God has made to be the day of the rejoicing of the church.**" "God on the Seventh Day **finished** all His works He had made" the Bible says, as it also says that "*God concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke, And God the Seventh Day did rest!*"! In speaking He rested ... the Seventh Day! This is God's mightiest Word: Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead! Truly, "In these last days" – in "*Gospel-times*" – "God spoke ... in the Son". God "thus" spoke: "**He spoke**" "The-Amen-of-the-Creation-of-God". His Word was "the True Witness" of His finishing and rest.

The Sabbath is not man's to **desecrate or** to **consecrate** as is supposed when making it depend on **man's work** and not on **God's Rest**: "*The Jews did not know, by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest ... The fourth command ... does not appoint any. It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of (our) labour, which particular day (we rest), God either had or should appoint!*"⁽⁵²⁾ This is man coercing God and not He commanding man. See App. Part 1 / 1, p. 325, "In Afternoon"

"It Was Morning And It Was Evening, The Day"

Seeing it cannot be denied the day of the entering into God's Rest is the Day of the Sabbath, one further objection must be considered. It is the problem of **the time** of Jesus' entering into Rest through Resurrection from the dead. As says Edwards, "*... that the shadow should give way to the substance.*"

First, let it be observed the **moment** creates the Day, not the day the moment. We talk of "Resurrection **Day**", not of Resurrection **Morning**" or whatever **portion** of the day. The **Event** – Resurrection – makes of it the **Day**-of-Resurrection. Thus Edwards also sees things. Says he, "*But the day that the children of Israel were delivered from their task-masters and had rest from them, was the day when the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. They had no rest from them till then. For though they were before come forth on their journey to go out of the land of Egypt; yet they were pursued by the Egyptians, and were exceedingly perplexed and distressed.*" Edwards immediately goes on, speaking of this "**day**", as the "**morning**": "*But on the morning that they came up out of the Red sea, they had complete and final deliverance; then they had full rest from their task-masters.*" Again he immediately continues, "*Then God said to them, "The Egyptians which ye have seen this day, ye shall see no more for ever;" Exod. xiv, 13. Then they enjoyed a joyful day of rest, a day of refreshment. Then they sang the song of Moses; and on that day was their Sabbath of rest.*" "*They enjoyed a joyful day of rest*", says Edwards, but half of it they spent in crossing the deep!

*“This coming up of the children of Israel out of the Red sea, was only a type of the resurrection of Christ. ... **On that morning** Christ, in this pillar of cloud and fire, rose out of the Red sea, as out of great waters; which was a type of Christ’s rising from a state of death, and from that great humiliation which he suffered in death.”* But Edwards in the next paragraph describes this “morning” as follows, *“Therefore, as the Jewish Sabbath was appointed **on the day on which** the pillar of cloud and fire rose out of the Red sea, and on which Moses and the church, the mystical body of Christ, came up out of the same sea, which is a type of the resurrection of Christ”*.

*“It is a great confirmation that the Christian Sabbath should be kept **on the day** of the rising of the real body of Christ from the grave, which is the antitype. For surely the Scriptures have taught us, that the type should give way to the antitype, and that **the shadow should give way to the substance.**”*

Is there any necessity in the morning or the afternoon in this scheme of things? Of course not; it necessitates the whole day! The event is much greater than the moment or even the whole day belonging to the moment. We may fairly conclude from this that Edwards makes no clear distinction between the **morning** and the **day** of the Israelites’ crossing of the Red Sea. But we do sense he reckons the **morning** of particular importance in **Jesus’ resurrection**: As he supposes this was the **day** of both the Israelites’ entering into the promised land and Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, it also must be the **morning** of both the Israelites’ entering into the promised land and Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Now if Jesus rose the morning, it must have been the First Day He rose on; if He rose the afternoon, it, according to the Gospels’ account of events, must have been the Sabbath He rose on. And mortal reason might say, because it was the morning in the type, it also had to be the morning in the anti-type. But just the opposite is necessarily so. **Because** in the **type**, it had been the morning, it, in the **anti-type**, **had** to be in the **afternoon**. The type, **in early times**, fore-shadowed; the anti-type, **in the last days**, fulfilled. Christ came “in the fullness of time”, in its **ripeness** as being the **Fruit** of God’s labours, the First Sheaf of **late-year** harvest. The precise word for such a time-slot of day is *epi-fohs-k-ousehi* – in-full / after-light / time-being = **“afternoon”** = “Sabbath’s-time **late**” – *opse sabbatohn!*

“The Sabbath was a day of rejoicing; for it was kept in commemoration of God’s glorious and gracious works of creation and the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore we are directed to call the Sabbath a delight. But it is not a proper day for the church, Christ’s

*spouse, to rejoice, when **Christ the bridegroom lies buried in the grave**, as Christ says, Matt. ix.15. “That the children of the bride-chamber cannot mourn, while the bridegroom is with them. But the time will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; then shall they mourn.” – **While Christ was holden under the chains of death**, then the bridegroom was taken from them; then it was a proper time for the spouse to mourn and not rejoice. But when Christ rose again, then it was a day of joy, because we are begotten again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”*

It was the one day, the day of **mourning**, that **turned into** the day of **joy**, the Sabbath Day of God’s Rest, when Christ rose again, because we are begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

“Christ has evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead, by taking it from time to time to appear to the apostles; and he chose this day to pour out the Holy Ghost on the apostles, which we read of in the second chapter of Acts. For this was on Pentecost, which was on the first day of the week, as you may see by Levit. xxiii. 15,16. And he honoured this day by pouring out his Spirit on the apostle John, and giving him his visions, Rev. i. 10. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day,” &c. – Now doubtless Christ had his meaning in thus distinguishingly honouring this day.”

“Christ has evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead ...” This can, may, and must be said, **of any and all** days, seasons, cycles and aeons, **only** the Seventh Day of the week – “concerning (which) God spoke thus that He in it rested” in completing in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead all the works of God. To say this of the First Day of the week is not only incorrect – it *evidently, on purpose and design* is false and *distinguishingly dishonouring* and desecrating *this day* the Sabbath Day. **One** verse, one **word** in God’s Written Word where *“Christ has evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week”*, and He *“the first day of the week rose from the dead”!* **One** verse, one **word** in God’s Written Word where **before, God**, *“evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week”* and Christ *“the first day of the week rose from the dead”!* So certain is it ... **if but one word!** No Christian would disagree. Then while **both Christ and God** “thus concerning the **Seventh** Day spoke” and not one word “thus concerning” the First Day of the week, Christ the Seventh day of the week rose from the dead – so certain is it; so **many** words confirming!

“Christ has evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead, **by**, taking it from time to time to **appear** to the apostles; and he chose this day to pour out the Holy Ghost on the apostles, which we read of in the second chapter of Acts. For this was on **Pentecost**, which was on the first day of the week, as you may see by Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. And he honoured this day by pouring out his Spirit on the apostle John, and giving him his visions, Rev. i. 10. “I was in the Spirit on the **Lord’s day**,” &c. – Now doubtless Christ had his meaning in thus distinguishingly honouring this day.”

Now doubtless Christ had his meaning in thus evidently, distinguishingly, peculiarly, on purpose and design, to honour the **Sabbath** Day and **NOT** the First Day, and his meaning was the Sabbath’s purpose to serve its Lord and the worship of his Body the Church – Hb.4:9 and Mk.2:28. There is a certain divine honour of this thing to happen on this day, it being “the mind and will of God” that Christ should rise from the dead “in fullness of Sabbath’s-time”. Thus Christ honoured **The Sabbath Day**.

“It is evident by the New Testament, that this (the First Day) was especially the day of the public worship of the primitive church, by the direction of the apostles”, and “We are told that this was the day that they were wont to come together to break bread”, and “this they evidently did with the approbation of the apostles”, and “they preached to them on that day”, and “they assembled together by the direction of the apostles”, and they “therefore” and “doubtless” did so.

“The Holy Ghost was careful that the public contributions should be on this day, in all the churches, rather than on any other day, as appears by our text”. Observe the inflated arguments and its audacity and repetition: “It is evident”; “by the New Testament” “especially the day”, “of the public worship”, “of the primitive church”, “by the direction (command)”, “of the apostles”, “we are told (commanded)”, “this was the day that” “they were wont (they were obliged always)”, “to come (as usual, as planned and obeying)”, “together (in holy Congregation)”, “to break bread (to have Holy Communion)”, “this (all these, every possible Church discipline)”, “they evidently did”, “with the approbation (to the example, instruction and use)”, “of the apostles (of whom but Paul joined the journey)”, who “preached”, “to them (the Church)”, “on that day”, “they assembled” “together”, “by the direction”, “of the apostles”, “therefore” and “doubtless” etc.

It is disheartening to read theologians for whom one has great admiration, respect and love, and see them get carried away in their enthusiasm for the “doctrine” of Sunday-sacredness. Right here in Edwards’ sermon where he refers to 1 Cor.16:1-2, he says, “So the Holy

Ghost was careful that the public contributions should be on this day, in all the churches, rather than on any other day, as appears by our text.” If Edwards is to be believed, the Holy Spirit and Paul’s wishes were directly contradictory. Paul said, “each one of you privately at home should work out and save up his amount as God prospered him ... so that “the public contribution” of charity or the collective Church offering, should, “when I come” be sent to Jerusalem. But let us not get carried away by Edwards’ repetition.

8.4.2.6.

“In the Spirit on the First Day of the Week”

“This first day of the week is in the New Testament called the Lord’s day; see Rev. i. 10. Some say, how do we know that this was the first day of the week? Every day is the Lord’s day. But it is the design of John to tell us when he had those visions. And if by the Lord’s day is meant any day, how does that inform us when that event took place?”

The Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace has much to say about the phrase “Lord’s Day” and the Scripture Revelation 1:10. But it is especially treated on only in **Part Five** – which at this stage has not been published in English. DV the author will have it translated in a year’s time. We shall be brief where we here treat on it under of all places the Scripture of 1 Corinthians 16:1-2! But if the Post Office says you do it, you do it.

“This first day of the week is in the New Testament called the Lord’s day”, says Edwards without hesitation. So does every Sunday-dogmatician and so the whole Church. We should rather say, so say the magicians, for where they get the idea from will ever remain a mystery.

“This first day of the week is in the New Testament called the Lord’s day; see Rev. i. 10”, says Edwards as though Rev. i. 10 is not the only Scripture mentioning the expression; as though the expression **frequently** appears “in the New Testament”. Most lay – and even most clergy – do not know their Bible. They believe in childlike faith. Reading an assertion like this, they definitely will understand that the “first day of the week” is **generally and often** called the Lord’s Day “in the New Testament”. This clever tactics in fact is a common feature of **Sunday-**arguments by which its protagonists try to make up for lack of clear or even just vague *New Testament* support for their position.

“Some say, how do we know that this was the first day of the week? Every day is the Lord’s day. But it is the design of John to tell us when he had those visions. And if by the Lord’s day is meant any day, how does that inform us when that event took place?”

It seems to me the gentleman protests too much. Did he not **a while ago** argue the Fourth Commandment does **not appoint** a specific day of the week for a Sabbath despite the fact it calls the Sabbath the

Seventh Day? Did he not reason it could be any day *after six days of labour*; that it could be called *Wednesday* for that matter?

Now he objects when *some say* the Lord's Day could be *any day or every day*?

Edwards says, "*it is the design of John to tell us when ... And if by the Lord's day is meant any day*" ... John's *design* would have been frustrated! Now would not **God's** "*design*" be frustrated *if by the Sabbath Day is meant any day*?

Edwards asks, "*If by the Lord's day is meant any day ... how does that inform us*" **which day of the week** the Lord's Day actually is?

Edwards, in other words, presumes and insists the Lord's Day **must** be this particular day of the **week**!

Edwards says we know which day of the week the Lord's Day was because "*it is the design of John to tell us when he had those visions*". Could John (for argument's sake) not have received visions on another day of the week than Sunday? I see no reason why not. The most important reason why the expression the Lord's Day means the Christian **Day of Worship**, is that "I, John, **was in the Spirit** on the Lord's Day".

John was **banished** to the island of Patmos, **away from the fellowship**, communion and worship of other Christians and **the only way for him to join** those far away in worship of the Christians' Lord, was **by faith**, "**in the Spirit**" – **the Spirit of worship**. There would come a day, said Jesus, that God would be worship in Spirit.

Now John of course **knew** as well as any other Christian – as well as Mark himself – that the **Lord** of the Christians, **Jesus, declared**, the Sabbath "was made for man" for this very purpose – **the purpose of His worship** – and that **He**, being worshipped by His Disciples the Church for whom He "made the Sabbath" to this purpose, "**is Lord indeed of the Sabbath Day**". The Sabbath for John by the **teaching of the very Lord** for whose sake he was banished, constituted the Christians' Day **of worship** of their Master. John **attended Church** "in the Spirit", on the **Day** for Church attendance, "**on the Lord's Day**"!

Then John of course also knew that the apostles and the **Congregations** of the Christians, "**as was (their) custom**" – as was "**His (their Lord's) custom**" – met in congregation of the fellowship of their faith and of the worship of their Lord, "**on the Sabbath Day**". So **John joined the Church** of the Elect of God in Christ "**in the Spirit**" – "the Spirit" **of prayer and worship and praise**, "**on The Lord's Day**". And thereby we know **without a shadow of doubt** "*when*" was the Lord's Day: It was the Day *when* the Lord is Worshiped by His Church – the Seventh Day of the week.

Finally John in his Gospel recorded an important time-indication, that of Mary seeing the grave the first time "when early darkness on the First Day of the week", in ordinary English, "early Saturday night". He also records that the **Lord** of the Christians, **Jesus, on the Sabbath declared**. He "the third day" would "finish" the works of His Father in being raised from the dead – vindicated "LORD" and Victor! Then John of course also **knew** – as well as any other Christian and even Matthew himself – that "**late in Sabbath's time afternoon the First Day of the week pending**, occurred a great earthquake while the angel of the Lord descended and flung open the grave's door-stone ...". John knew Christ on that Day "finished" the works of His Father in being raised from the dead – vindicated "LORD" and Victor! Would he not have but one description for that great day, "The Lord's Day"?

"But what is meant by this expression we know, just in the same way as we know what is the meaning of any word in the original of the New Testament, or the meaning of any expression in an ancient language, viz. by what we find to be the universal signification of the expression in ancient times. This expression, the Lord's day, is found by the ancient use of the whole Christian church, by what appears in all the writings of ancient times, even from the apostles' days, to signify the first day of the week."

(We before have been confronted with this sort of argument when we treated on Bacchiocchi's explanations for the meaning of the word translated "*after*" in Matthew 28:1.)

"*What is the meaning of any word in the original*"? is the soundest of questions. And Edwards supplies the soundest of criteria for finding out; one finds *the meaning of any word in the original* "*by what we find to be the universal signification of the expression in ancient times*". But he immediately **violates** this very principle! Says Edwards, "*This expression, the Lord's day, is found by the ancient use of the ... Christian church, by what appears in all the writings of ancient times, even from the apostles' days, to signify the first day of the week.*" By this principle the meaning of "*this expression, the Lord's Day*" should be found by its ancient use **before** the Christian Church or at **latest, during** the time of the **original** or Apostolic Church. By this principle the meaning of "*this expression, the Lord's Day*" **cannot** be found by its use by the Church **after** the time found here in Revelation 1:10 – the exact opposite of the principle Edwards lays down himself!

Now because the words in this expression, "Lord's Day" (*kyriakeh hehmera*) won't be found by ancient use **before this instance** – this is the expression's first appearance in time and its only in the New Testament – its meaning may not be determined by its use of centuries or

of only decades **after**. *"The ancient use of the whole Christian church, ... in all the writings of ancient times"* that actually are **modern** times **relative** to the time of the *original ancient use* of the expression, may and in fact do differ radically from the *original ancient*, and **only** use of it in John and the New Testament. *This expression, the Lord's day, is found by the ancient use of the whole Christian Church, by what appears in all the writings of New Testament times, even from the apostles' days, to signify the **Seventh** day of the week.*

*"And the expression implies in it the holiness of the day. For doubtless the day is called the **Lord's day**, as the sacred supper is called the **Lord's supper**, which is so called, because it is a holy supper, to be celebrated in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and of his redemption. So this is a holy day, to be kept in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and his redemption."*

Remember that the ancient redemption was **Christ's**, as it was of the **Father's** doing. **All** Scripture know but **One** Revealer and **One** Redeemer. **All** Scripture know but **One** Redemption, and One Name by and in Whom redemption is obtained: **The LORD!** Being the one Redeemer's Day it is the one Conqueror's, one Lord's, Day – **the one day of victory**, the victory of vanquishing the last enemy, death. Were this LORD to change his Day of Lordship He would have had to change his victory into defeat, renounce His own Lordship. Instead He established it, once for all, in resurrection from the dead, **"in Sabbath's time"**. **The name** *"implies in it the holiness of the day"*, a holiness that shall be found only in and only upon the greatness of the LORD God **in triumph of accomplishment** in the LORD Jesus Christ – only **in resurrection** of the LORD Jesus Christ from the dead. *Doubtless the Day of vanquishing the enemy is called the Lord's Day! "This is a Holy Day, to be kept in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and His redemption!"*

"The first day of the week being in Scripture called the Lord's day, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God; for God has been pleased to call it by his own name. When any thing is called by the name of God in Scripture, this denotes the appropriation of it to God. – Thus God put his name upon his people Israel of old; Numbers vi. 27. "And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel." They were called by the name of God, as it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 14. "If my people which are called by my name," &c. i. e. They were called God's people, or the Lord's people. This denoted that they were a holy peculiar people above all others. Deut. vii. 6. "Thou art a holy people unto the Lord;" and so in ver. 14. and many other places."

"The first day of the week being in Scripture called the Lord's day ..." – the thing he supposed Edwards summarily *"called the Lord's day"*! *"So also we find that the first day of the week is called by God's name, being called in Scripture God's day, or the Lord's day, which denotes that it is a holy day, a day appropriated to holy uses, above all others in the week"* Edwards unambiguously claims, but supplies no finding. He only plays on the one string of Revelation 1:10 as had his violin several. Claims he, *"We find by all accounts ..."* the name "Lord's Day" applied to the First Day and kept by Christians, but again supplies no finding. Claims he, *"the universal custom of the Christian church, in all ages, even from the age of the apostles, (has been) to keep the first day of the Week"*. But he supplies not a single finding of the custom *"from the age of the apostles"*, or of the first day of the week being called the Lord's day. Nor could he in the writings which remain of the second. *"We read"* says Edwards, *"of the Christians keeping the First Day for the Lord's day ... in all succeeding ages: and there are no accounts that contradict them"*. But he doesn't mention the voluminous accounts of many synods that imply the Christians keeping the **TRUE** Lord's day, and that *this day the Sabbath Day, has all along been kept by Christians though not in all countries throughout the world, and by far not all that have borne the name of Christian!* So that bearing the name of Christian is no guarantee the TRUE Lord's Day was kept so *universally*.

So, when every Scripture-based argument has failed, *"... although this be not sufficient of itself without a foundation in Scripture; yet it may be a confirmation of it, because here (in "the universality of the custom" to keep Sunday for the Lord's Day) is really matter of conviction in it to our reason. Reason may greatly confirm truths revealed in the Scriptures. The universality of the custom throughout all Christian countries, in all ages, by what account we have of them, is a good argument, that the church had it from the apostles: and it is difficult to conceive how all should come to agree to set up such a custom through the world, of different sects and opinions, and we have no account of any such thing."*

"Reason" soon proves to be nothing but *"a good argument"*. And the *"good argument"* soon proves to be nothing but *"the universality of the custom"*! Thus *"reason may greatly confirm"* the truth *"that the church had it (Sunday for the Lord's Day) from the apostles"*. By *"a custom set up through the world ... all should come to agree"*, *"reason"* without a foundation in Scripture of itself **is** sufficient; it may be a confirmation of the assertion the First Day of the week is the Lord's Day.

"It is no way weakening to these arguments, that there is nothing more plainly said about it in the New Testament, till John wrote his Revelation, because there is a sufficient reason to be given for it. In all probability it was purposely avoided by the Holy Spirit, in the first

settling of Christian churches in the world, both among the heathen and among the Jews, but especially for the

^{100b}*sake of the Jews, and out of tenderness to the Jewish Christians. For it is evident that Christ and the apostles declared one thing after another to them gradually as they could bear it.*

*“There is nothing more plainly said about (the First Day of the week being the Lord’s Day) in the New Testament”. There is also **nothing more obscure** said in the New Testament about the First Day being the Lord’s Day. **So, how**, “it is no way weakening to these arguments” “that the church had (the First Day of the week for the Lord’s Day) **from the apostles**”, only the greatest optimist or most petulant can see ... “till John wrote his Revelation”! From John “**nothing more plainly**” could be said about it. Revelation 1:10 clears up any doubt. And so we keep on arguing in circles. The only proof worse than “reason” “in such a case as this is ... the tradition of the church from age to age”. Though it be no rule, yet may be a great contortionist of truth.*

*“The first day of the week being in Scripture called the Lord’s day, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God” – or – The **Seventh** day of the week being in Scripture called the **Sabbath of the Lord your God and the Lord’s Day**, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God” ... **Which will it be?** The sun’s or the Son’s? This sufficiently makes of the Church’s decision and practice to make the First Day of the week The Lord’s Day, **a transgression of the same kind as to have strange gods** before **the only true** God. *The first day of the week* is NOT *in Scripture called the Lord’s day*. To assert it is, is to provoke God in his face. The Lord – Who gives the days names and instils days with their meaning – **jealously** calls Himself of the Sabbath, **Lord!** For only God creates the days and weeks and by his providence their recurrence. Only God calls them by their names as He calls his elect by their names, sovereignly, exalted, mightily, without consultation, without help. To the honour of God: **He only** calls into being by calling things by **their** names! And **He only** calls things by the Name belonging to **Himself** – incredible honour! He calls things by His own Name that **man should fear** before the Lord and honour those things He so highly honoured. Holy unto the Lord are the things called by God’s Name. And not least, **the Sabbath** of the LORD thy God! “Thus, God of **the Seventh Day** spoke”! And it is important to remember that God thus, as Karl Barth has said, made man’s time His own, so that here, it is the Seventh Day **of the week** God made his own!*

By taking from the Sabbath the honour God bestowed upon it the First Day receives **no more or better** honour than the Lord God gave it.

On the contrary it, the First Day of the week is **dishonoured and robbed** of the worthiness and honour for being the Day God first created on. And man eventually is the loser; and God, the dishonoured and displeased. Never could we agree that “*God has been pleased to call it (the First Day) by his own name*, as Edwards claims. By saying so, God is made the liar for calling Himself Lord of the Sabbath Day. Because God calls the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, “My holy (day)”, etc. He must be much **displeased** by the First Day being called **by His own Name**. For God has been pleased to call “**The Seventh Day**” by his own name. God has been pleased, “For He spoke in Scripture of the Seventh Day **like this** (*houohs*), Verily God on the Seventh Day from all His works did rest!” No beating about the bush, God spoke concerning the Seventh Day **like this, expressing his pleasure** in the Day of His choice and making! Yes, in “*speaking of it*”, God expressed his **joy** in calling the Sabbath Day by His own Name. **Nowhere** does Scripture **hint** at the **First Day** “**like this**” – not in Scripture, that is, and not in Jesus Christ! Nowhere is the First Day called by the Name of God. Nowhere in Scripture is the First Day of God’s good creation thus made a thief that steals the name God Himself bestowed on the Sabbath Day. The First Day of the week is made the thief that robs the Sabbath Day of man’s rest so as to allow God to work in him, as Calvyn explained the Sabbath’s divine purpose. Nowhere in Scripture is the First Day of the week so robbed of its **own** dignity by the dignity bestowed upon it by the **Church**, so robbed of the dignity which **God** bestowed on it – its divinely attributed dignity of being a day upon which **man** is free and divinely privileged to **work**. Indirectly **the Sabbath is made the thief**, for now the Seventh Day becomes that day upon which **man** is free and divinely privileged to **do his own work** and God is prevented to work in him. So the whole scheme of God’s times is turned upside down by the Church’s clever conning – parading the Sunday for The Lord’s Day.

“When any thing is called by the name of God in Scripture, this denotes the appropriation of it to God. – Thus God put his name upon his people Israel of old; Numbers vi. 27. “And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel.” They were called by the name of God, as it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 14. “If my people which are called by my name,” &c. i. e. They were called God’s people, or the Lord’s people. This denoted that they were a holy peculiar people above all others. Deut. vii. 6. “Thou art a holy people unto the Lord ;” and so in ver. 14. and many other places.”

Now where in **Scripture** or by **deed** of God is the **First Day** thus called by the Name of God? Where is it thus *appropriated to God*? Where in Scripture thus **in the Name** of the LORD did the First Day receive the Promise of God’s Finishing and Rest? Nowhere and most

certainly not in Revelation 1:10! But the Seventh Day **is** called by the Name of God; **is** thus *appropriated* to Him in sanctification, in blessing, in finishing; **does** in the Name of the LORD receive the Promise in resting.

If the assertion were true that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the **First** Day of the week, this honour and this dignity “*above all others*” would belong to **it! Yes!** But since it **isn’t true** that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the First Day of the week, and since it **never in Scripture receives the Name of the LORD**, the First Day of the week **is never expected or prepared**, that Jesus Christ would rise from the dead on it! **Were** the first day of the week in Scripture **called** the Lord’s Day, it **sufficiently** would have made it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God. **But now it is not**, and should be made out **only** to be the first day of **our** weekly labour. **Were** the first day of the week in Scripture **promised** to be the Lord’s Day, it would have been made out above all others to be the day of the week of **Jesus’ resurrection**. **But now it is not**, and therefore the **Seventh** Day most **fitting and duly** is made out to be **the Day** of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and holy unto God’s worship and rest **for that reason**.

To be called God’s, or the Lord’s, denotes holy and peculiar ownership and for believers holy and peculiar stewardship. If the **Sabbath** is called God’s, or the Lord’s, it denotes holy and peculiar ownership – it is a stewardship unto God – and therefore holy and peculiar stewardship – for believers their **Christian duty**. If the **Sunday** is called God’s, or the Lord’s, it denotes holy and peculiar ownership – it is God’s – and therefore holy and peculiar stewardship – it is for believers their duty. So **which day of the week – the Seventh or the First** – is in Scripture called God’s, or the Lord’s? **IT IS THE FINAL QUESTION**. “Said the LORD your God ... **My Sabbaths** they greatly polluted ... but I wrought for My **Name’s** sake, that it should not be polluted ... Hallow **my** Sabbaths and they shall be a sign between me and you, that you may know that **I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD!**” (Ez.20:7, 13, 14, 20.) So is not the **Sabbath** called God’s, is not the **Sabbath** called by the Lord’s Name? ... “My holy day ... the holy of the LORD : worthy to be honoured, and you will honour Him ... for the mouth of the LORD has **spoken!**” (Is.58:13,14) “For God of the Seventh Day thus in Scripture **spoke!**” (Hb.4:4) Who will **still** say the LORD God called not the **Sabbath** God’s or the LORD’s? Then hear the LORD God speak, “Therefore the SON OF MAN IS LORD indeed of the Sabbath Day!” **And so in many other places! Being in Scripture called the Lord’s day ... makes the Sabbath Day out to be ... holy unto God! GOD** had a regard for **HIS** Sabbath above almost anything in the Law; and there was that in the Old Testament which tended to uphold God’s **People** in the

observance of it, much more strongly than any thing else that was of His Commandment. “*God had made so much of it, had so solemnly, frequently, and carefully commanded it, and had so often so dreadfully punished the breach of it, that there was more colour for their retaining this custom than almost any other. ... Yea, therefor Christ dealt very tenderly with them in this point ...*” – **it was like changing the water of the cisterns of Canaan into wine!**

Christ also very **severely** dealt with them in this point – **it was like putting new wine into new bottles!** “*He told them plainly the principle doctrines of the kingdom of heaven. – He took the most favourable opportunities to tell them of His sufferings and death ... and they as He were confirmed in it that He was the Messiah.*” Jesus **used** the Sabbath Day especially, for this the loftiest of purpose of serving Christ in His suffering and exaltation – of confirming Him in it that He was the Messiah! Christ Himself had a regard for the Sabbath **for this reason only** above almost anything in the Law and Scripture and Christ Himself tended to uphold the Sabbath Day in the observance of it **for this reason only** – more strongly than anything else that He divinely instituted. Christ Himself had made so much of it, had so solemnly, frequently, and carefully commanded and set the example **in the true meaning of it**, and had so often so dreadfully judged the breach of it **for that reason**, that there was more to Jesus’ Sabbath-custom than to almost any other.

“*Other things of this nature we find very gradually revealed. Christ had many things to say, as we are informed, which yet he said not, because they could not as yet bear them, and gave this reason for it, that it was like putting new wine into old bottles. They were so contrary to their old customs ...*” Edwards’ tells the thing just the opposite of what it really is. Christ never taught things “*other*” and “*contrary*” to the teaching of the Old Testament. He only taught the very **fulfilment** of the whole Old Testament in the New – which was He himself. What Jesus left “*more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost*” is found taught in the Gospels – in fact in the whole of the New Testament, because it dates after Pentecost. Especially the Gospels teach the Sabbath **as Jesus wanted it – revealed through the Holy Spirit!**

“*Things of this nature we find very gradually revealed.*” The concept of *gradual revelation* should be understood in relation to the dispensations within God’s Covenant of Grace. Accordingly the acme of God’s revelation “*of things of this nature*” that include the Sabbath Day won’t be found in the Old Testament and in creation, but in Christ Jesus, and in Him in resurrection from the dead. The Gospel’s is the highest and most intense of all God’s revelations and likewise of the Sabbath Day. As redemption is first established in the finishing victory of Jesus’

resurrection and consequently creation, so are all “*things of this nature*” – things depending on redemption and creation – like the Sabbath Day. The centre or fullness of God’s revelations (the revelations of Himself and of his mercies and judgements) is Jesus Christ who is the Fullness of God. His revelation’s fullness is neither the beginning and creation nor the end and Jesus’ return. God’s Presence is Jesus Christ, and that God has made true in the Man from Nazareth called Jesus. We find a Sabbath Day – a God’s Day of Rest – **revealed, begun, and, completed**, in the life of this Man the Son of Man on earth; and it is of the week its Seventh Day and not its First. It is of the week its Seventh Day, called into existence in the **life** of this Jesus, and for this very life, in His **resurrection** from the dead “in Sabbath’s–time”.

Edwards makes his statement that Jesus “*gradually revealed*” “*many things*” not at first revealed, seem reasonable because **he**, compares **Christ’s** teaching with the **Jews’** to whose teaching, Jesus’ *revealing* and *informing*, in fact, **was** *contrary*. Edwards draws a parallel of gradual development between these where he should have drawn it between the Old- and the New Testament- revelations of God. God’s revelations haven’t got to do with “*their old customs*”, but with **Jesus’** and the apostles’ and that of His Church. God’s revelations are found in the **Scriptures** – not in the *Jews’* traditions or “*customs*” whether those Jews were the apostles or not.

Again, if Edwards wrote the truth, and “*we find*” “*things of this nature*” “*revealed*”, “*informed*”, “*given*” ... by **Christ**, we ask, **Where?** These things “*which yet He said not*”, where, **to today**, do we find it? Where do we read how Jesus “*told many things ... much more plainly after his resurrection than before*”? In the **Gospels** – and nothing on the First Day do we find there!

“*He told them many things much more plainly after his resurrection than before. But even then, he did not tell them all, but left more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. They therefore were much more enlightened after that than before. However, as yet he did not reveal all. The abolition of the ceremonial law about meats and drinks was not fully known till after this*” ... and so of course the Sabbath according to Edwards.

“*Much more plainly after his resurrection*” says Edwards, “*but even then*” “*not all*”. Jesus “*left more to be revealed at Pentecost*”, says he. But this is not all yet, according to Edwards! Notice: “*They therefore were much more enlightened after that than before.*” “*After that*” – after Pentecost! *The disciples therefore were much more enlightened after Pentecost than before. Inevitably so!* Inevitably, because nowhere after Pentecost do we find this much greater enlightenment as far as the **New Testament Scriptures** goes! As far as the New Testament Scriptures

goes, we, after Pentecost, find the **Gospels** written – written by the inspiration of “*the Holy Ghost*”!

In Part Three of Part Three we noticed the historic sequence of the New Testament Revelation or **writing** of the New Testament. The **Gospels** were written **latest** in time, and therefore **they** contain what Jesus before His death and resurrection **meant to tell** his disciples “*after this*”. During Jesus’ earthly life, Edwards assumes, Jesus “*as yet did not reveal all*”. “*He told them many things much more plainly after his resurrection than before.*” In fact then the **Gospels** tell not only what happened “*a long time before*” during Jesus’ lifetime, but *most plainly* and clearly and completely records what Christ “*left more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost*”. Even what **Pentecost** “*after his resurrection*” had in store is reflected in the **Gospels**. Nowhere but in the New Testament and especially in the Gospels could what Christ “*after enlightened*”, be found. Only this “*after*”-time saw “all power given unto Me” – because of Jesus’ sending the Holy Spirit upon his Faithful. Jesus *told them plainly* through the **Holy Spirit**. “The Holy Spirit shall lead you in **all Truth**. ... He **of ME** shall witness”! The New Testament and **it only** answers to these conditions. The New Testament only for the Church is authoritative. The New Testament for Christ’s Church is Law, Revelation and Inspiration. NO “**GRADUAL REVELATION**” could improve or replace it. Edwards’ theory makes of the age “*after that*” – **the age of falling away** – the age of “*enlightenment*”. But the period of “*inspiration*” or “*the Holy Ghost*” was the period during and of the apostles’ lifetime and the writing of the New Testament – the first century of the Christian era. Any “*enlightenment*” and “*revelations*” “*after that*”, blast away the very foundation of the Gospel so that the House of God is built on rubble and must give way to the storms of rebellion against the *mind and will of God*. Revelation doesn’t deal with “*scruples*”. It doesn’t supply “*knowledge to keep to (one)self*”. It doesn’t teach “*the cessation of the ceremonial laws*”, but its fulfilment in its Anti-Type the living, dying and risen Saviour.

It is the understatement of all time to say “*that it is very possible that the apostles themselves at first might not have had this change of the day of the Sabbath fully revealed to them.*” It is **absolutely certain** the apostles themselves at **no time or stage** had **any** change or part of a change of the day of the Sabbath revealed to them. Neither had the Church, or the world – but *very possibly* the enemies of the Gospel!

(*The Netherlands Confession*, Article 7, says, “Because the whole manner wherein we must worship God is carefully described in the Holy Scriptures, no one – not even the Apostles – may teach us differently than what is already taught us in it.”)

“The Holy Ghost, at his descent, revealed much to them”.

“After that”, they were ignorant of **any new** doctrine. Yea, **all new** doctrines were so a great while after, their propagators **acted** the part of apostles, in preaching, baptising, and governing the church. Peter was acted first bishop of the Church in Rome even, and so were the apostles in general impersonated many times as authors of pseudo-gospels and teachings. And **these** “revelations” are the origin of Sunday – **paraded** “the Lord’s Day”!

And so we find another repetition of the full spectrum of Sabbath-objections under the heading of 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 to further portray the evolution of Sunday-observance: “Thus tender was Christ of the church while an infant. He did not feed them with strong meat, but was careful to bring in the observance of the Lord’s day by degrees, and therefore took all occasions to honour it, by appearing from time to time of choice on that day; by sending down his Spirit on that day in that remarkable manner at Pentecost; by ordering Christians to meet in order to break bread on that day, and by ordering their contributions and other duties of worship to be holden on it; thus introducing the observance of it by degrees. And though as yet the Holy Ghost did not speak very plainly about it, yet God took special care that there should be sufficient evidences of his will, to be found out by the Christian church, when it should be more established and settled, and should have come to the strength of a man.

Thus I leave it with everyone to judge, whether there be not sufficient evidence, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be kept by the Christian church as a Sabbath?”

Thus I leave it with everyone to judge, whether there be not **every** sufficient evidence, that it is the mind and will of God, that the **Sabbath of the LORD your God** should be kept by the Christian Church as a Sabbath, indeed as the Lord’s Day?

8.4.3.

^{101a} **Sermon XV**

The Perpetuity and Change of the Sabbath

1 COR. xvi. 1, 2. N()W concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God has prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

(Now read this Sermon but in this paragraph,

“It is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties ...”, replace the name of the day, “First Day of the week” with “Seventh Day of the week”; then keep in mind while reading on, that this the Seventh Day of the week is the Sabbath of the LORD your God ...

Then in this paragraph, “On this doctrine I have already discoursed, under two propositions, showing, first, That it is the will of God, that one day of the week be, in all ages, set apart for religious duties; and secondly, That under the gospel, this day ought to be the first day of the week. I now proceed to the” do the same, but also watch “that one day of the week be” the Seventh Day Sabbath!

APPLICATION.

This shall be in a use of exhortation. 1. Let us be thankful for the institution of the Christian Sabbath. It is a thing wherein God has shown his mercy to us, and his care for our souls. He shows, that he, by his infinite wisdom, is contriving for our good, as Christ teaches us, that the Sabbath was made for man; Mark ii. 27. “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” It was made for the profit and for the comfort of our souls.

The Sabbath is a day of rest: God has appointed that we should, every seventh day, rest from all our worldly labours. Instead of that, he might have appointed the hardest labours for us to go through, some severe hardships for us to endure. It is a day of outward, but especially of spiritual, rest. It is a day appointed of God, that his people thereon may find rest unto their souls; that the souls of believers may rest and be refreshed in their Saviour. It is a day of rejoicing: God made it to be a joyful day to the church; Ps. cxviii. 24. – “This is the day which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.” They that aright receive and improve the Sabbath, call it a delight and honourable: it is a pleasant and a joyful day to them; it is an image of the future heavenly rest of the church. Heb. iv. 9, 10, 11. “There remaineth therefore a rest (or sabbatism, as it is in the original) to the people of God”. For he that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.”

The Christian Sabbath is one of the most precious enjoyments of the visible church. Christ showed his love to his church in instituting it; and it becomes the Christian church to be thankful to her Lord for it. The very name of this day, the Lord's day, or Jesus' day, should endear it to Christians, as it intimates the special relation it has to Christ, and also the design of it., which is the commemoration of our dear Saviour, and his love to his church in redeeming it.

2. Be exhorted to keep this day holy. – God has given such evidences that this is his mind, that he will surely require it of you, if you do not strictly and conscientiously observe it. And if you do thus observe it, you may have this comfort in the reflection upon your conduct, that you have not been superstitious in it, but have done as God has revealed it to be his mind and will in his word, that you should do; and that in so doing you are in the way of God's acceptance and reward.

Here let me lay before you the following motives to excite you to this duty.

(1.) By a strict observation of the Sabbath, the name of God is honoured, and that in such a way as is very accept-^{101b}able to him. Isa. lviii. 13. "If thou call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and shalt honour him." God is honoured by it, as it is a visible manifestation of respect to God's holy law, and a reverencing of that which has a peculiar relation to God himself, and that more in some respects than the observance of many other commands. And man may be just, and generous, and yet not so plainly show respect to the revealed mind and will of God, for many of the heathen have been so. But if a person, with evident strictness and care, observe the Sabbath, it is a visible manifestation of a conscientious regard to God's declaration of his mind, and so is a visible honour done to his authority.

By a strict observance of the Sabbath, the face of religion is kept up in the world. If it were not for the Sabbath, there would be but little public and visible appearance of serving, worship, and reverencing the supreme and invisible Being. The Sabbath seems to have been appointed very much for this end, viz. to uphold the visibility of religion in public, or among professing societies of men; and by how much greater the strictness is with which the Sabbath is observed, and with how much more solemnity the duties of it are observed among a people; by so much the greater is the manifestation among them of respect to the Divine Being.

This should be a powerful motive with us to the observation of the Sabbath. It should be our study above all things to honour and glorify God. It should be the great thing with all that bear the name of Christians, to honour their great God and King and I hope is a great thing with many that hear me at this time. If it be your inquiry, if it be

your desire, to honour God; by this subject you are directed to one way whereby you may do much in that way, viz. by honouring the Sabbath, and by showing a careful and strict observance of it.

(2.) That which is the business of the Sabbath is the greatest business of our lives, viz. that of religion. To serve and worship God is that for which we were made, and for which we had our being given us. Other business, which is of a secular nature, and on which we are wont to attend on week days, is but subordinate, and ought to be subservient to the higher purposes and ends of religion. Therefore surely we should not think much of devoting one seventh part of our time, to be wholly spent in this business, an to be set apart to exercise ourselves in the immediate duties of religion.

(3.) Let it be considered, that all our time is God's, and therefore when he challenges of us one day in seven, he challenges his own. He does not exceed his right; he would not have exceeded it, if he had challenged a far greater proportion of our time to be spent in his immediate service. But he has mercifully considered our state, and our necessities here; and, as he has consulted the good of our souls in appointing a seventh day for the immediate duties of religion, so he has considered our outward necessities, and has allowed us six days for attendance on our outward affairs. – What unworthy treatment therefore will it be of God, if we refuse to allow him even the seventh day!

(4.) As the Sabbath is a day which is especially set apart for religious exercises, so it is a day wherein God especially confers his grace and blessing. – As God has commanded us to set it apart to have converse with him, so has he set it apart for himself to have converse with us. As God has commanded us to observe the Sabbath, so God observes the Sabbath too. It is with respect to the Sabbath, as Solomon prayed that it might be with respect to the temple, 2 Chron. vi. 20. His eyes are open upon it: he stands ready then especially to hear prayers, to accept of religious services, to meet his people, to manifest himself^{1-2a} to them, to give his Holy Spirit and blessing to those who diligently and conscientiously sanctify it.

That we should sanctify the Sabbath, as we have observed, is according to God's institution. God in a sense observes his own institutions; i. e. is wont to cause them to be attended with a blessing. The institutions of God are his appointed means of grace, and with his institutions he has promised his blessing; Exod. xx. 24. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." For the same reason we may conclude, that God will meet his people and bless them, waiting upon him not only in appointed places, but at appointed times and in all appointed ways. Christ has promised, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the

midst of them, Matt. xviii. 20. One thing included in the expression, in his name is, that it is by his appointment, and according to his institution.

God has made it our duty by his institution, to set apart this day for a special seeking of his grace and blessing. From which we may argue, that he will be especially ready to confer his grace on those who thus seek it. If it be the day on which God requires us especially to seek him, we may argue, that it is a day on which especially he will be found. That God is ready on this day especially to bestow his blessing on them that keep it aright, is implied in that expression of God's blessing the Sabbath-day. God has not only hallowed the Sabbath-day, but blessed it; he has given his blessing to it, and will confer his blessing upon all the due observers of it. He has hallowed it, or appointed that it be kept holy by us, and has blessed it; he hath determined to give his blessing upon it.

So that here is great encouragement for us to keep holy the Sabbath, as we would seek God's grace and our own spiritual good. The Sabbath-day is an accepted time, a day of salvation, a time wherein God especially loves to be sought, and loves to be found. The Lord Jesus Christ takes delight in his own day; he delights to honour it; he delights to meet with and manifest himself to his disciples on it, as he showed before his ascension, by appearing to them from time to time on this day. On this day he delights to give his Holy Spirit, as he intimated, by choosing it as the day on which to pour out the Spirit in so remarkable a manner on the primitive church, and on which to give his Spirit to the apostle John.

(Now read the following two paragraphs and ask if not the one Day applies?)

Of old God blessed the seventh day, or appointed it to be a day whereon especially he would bestow blessings on his people, as an expression of his own joyful remembrance of that day, and of the rest and refreshment which he had on it. Exod. xxxi. 16, 17. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath-day. – For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." As princes give gifts on their birth-days, on their marriage-days, and the like; so God was wont to dispense spiritual gifts on the seventh day.

But how much more reason has Christ to bless the day of his resurrection, and to delight to honour it, and to confer his grace and blessed gifts on his people on this day. It was a day whereon Christ rested and was refreshed in a literal sense. It was a day of deliverance from the chains of death, the day of his finishing that great and difficult work of redemption, which had been upon his heart from all eternity; the day of his justification by the Father; the day of the beginning of his exaltation, and of the fulfilment of the promises of the Father; the day when he had

eternal life, which he had purchased, put into his hands. – On this day Christ does indeed delight to distribute gifts, and blessings, and joy, and happiness, and will delight to do the same to the end of the world.

O therefore, how well is it worth our while to improve this day, to call upon God and seek Jesus Christ! Let awakened sinners be stirred up by these things to improve the Sabbath-day, as they would lay themselves most in the way of the Spirit of God. Improve this day to call upon God; for then he is near. Improve it for reading the Holy Scriptures, and diligently attending his word preached; for then is the likeliest time to have the Spirit accompanying it. Let the saints who are desirous of growing in grace, and enjoying communion with Christ, improve the Sabbath in order to it.

^{102b} (5.) The last motive which I shall mention, is the experience of the influence which a strict observance of the Sabbath has upon the whole of religion. It may be observed, that in those places where the Sabbath is well kept, religion in general will be most flourishing; and that in those places where the Sabbath is not much noticed, and much is not made of it, there is no great matter of religion any way. – But,

Inquiry. How ought we to keep the Sabbath?

Answer, I. We ought to be exceedingly careful on this day to abstain from sin. Indeed, all breaches of the Sabbath are sinful; but we speak now of those things which are in themselves sinful, or sinful upon other accounts, besides that they are done upon the Sabbath. The Sabbath being holy time, it is especially defiled by the commission of sin. Sin by being committed on this day becomes the more exceeding sinful. We are required to abstain from sin at all times, but especially on holy time. The commission of immoralities on the Sabbath is the worst way of profaning it, that which most provokes God, and brings most guilt upon the souls of men.

How provoking must it be to God, when men do those things on that day which he has sanctified, and set apart to be spent in the immediate exercises of religion – which are not fit to be done on common days, which are impure and wicked whenever they are done!

Therefore if any persons be guilty of any such wickedness, as intemperance or any unclean actions, they do in a very horrid manner profane the Sabbath. Or if they be guilty of wickedness in speech, of talking profanely, or in an unclean and lascivious manner, or of talking against their neighbours, they do in a dreadful manner profane the Sabbath. Yet very commonly those who are used to such things on week-days, have not a conscience to restrain them on the Sabbath. It is well if those that live in the indulgence of the lust of uncleanness on week-days, be not some any or other unclean on the Sabbath. They will be indulging the same lusts then; they will be indulging their impure flames in their

imaginations at least: and it is well if they keep clear while in the house of God, and while they pretend to be worshipping God. The unclean young man gives this account of himself, Prov. v. 14. "I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and the assembly". So those who are addicted to an impure way of talking in the week-time, have nothing to keep them from the same upon the Sabbath, when they meet together. But dreadfully is God provoked by such things.

We ought carefully to watch over our own hearts, and to avoid all sinful thoughts on the Sabbath. We ought to maintain such a reverence for the Sabbath, as to have a peculiar dread of sin, such as shall awe us to a very careful watch over ourselves.

2. We ought to be careful to abstain from all worldly concerns. The reason, as we have showed, why it is needful and proper, that certain stated parts of time should be set apart to be devoted to religious exercises, is because the state of mankind is such in this world, that they are necessitated to exercise their minds, and employ their thoughts, about secular matters. It is therefore convenient that there should be stated times, wherein all should be obliged to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may the more freely, and with less entanglement, be engaged in religious and spiritual exercises.

We are therefore to do thus, or else we frustrate the very design of the institution of a Sabbath. We are strictly to abstain from being outwardly engaged in any worldly thing, either worldly business or recreations. We are to rest in remembrance of God's rest from the work of creation, and of Christ's rest from the work of redemption. We should be careful that we do not encroach upon the Sabbath at its beginning, by busying ourselves about the world after the Sabbath is begun. We should avoid talking about worldly matters, and even thinking about them; for whether we outwardly concern ourselves with the world or not, yet if our minds be upon it, we frustrate the end of the Sabbath. The end of its separation from other days is, that our minds may be disengaged from worldly things: and we are to avoid being outwardly concerned with the world, only for this reason, that that cannot be without taking up our minds. – We ought therefore to give the

^{103a} world no place in our thoughts on the Sabbath, but to abstract ourselves from all worldly concerns, and maintain a watch over ourselves, that the world do not encroach, as it is very apt to do. Isa. lviii. 13,14.

3. We ought to spend the time in religious exercises. This is the more ultimate end of the Sabbath. We are to keep our minds separate from the world, principally for this end, that we may be the more free for religious exercises. – Though it be a day of rest, yet it was not designed to be a day of idleness. To rest from worldly employment, without employing

ourselves about any thing, is but to lay ourselves so much more in the devil's way. The mind will be employed some way or other; and therefore doubtless the end for which we are to call off our minds from worldly things on the Sabbath is, that we may employ them about things that are better.

We are to attend on spiritual exercises with the greatest diligence. That it is a day of rest, does not hinder us in so doing; for we are to look on spiritual exercises but as the rest and refreshment of the soul. In heaven, where the people of God have the most perfect rest, they are not idle, but are employed in spiritual and heavenly exercises. – We should take care therefore to employ our minds on a Sabbath-day on spiritual objects by holy meditation; improving for our help therein the Holy Scriptures, and other books that are according to the word of God. We should also employ ourselves outwardly on this day in the duties of divine worship, in public and private. It is proper to be more frequent and abundant in secret duties on this day than on other days, as we have time and opportunity, as well as to attend on public ordinances.

It is proper on this day, not only especially to promote the exercise of religion in ourselves, but also in others; to be assisting them, and endeavouring to promote their spiritual good, by religious conference. – Especially those who have the care of others ought, on this day, to endeavour to promote their spiritual good: heads of families should be instructing and counselling their children, and quickening them in the ways of religion, and should see to it that the Sabbath be strictly kept in their houses. A peculiar blessing may be expected upon those families where there is due care taken that the Sabbath be strictly and devoutly observed.

4. We are on this day especially to meditate upon and celebrate the work of redemption. We are with special joy to remember the resurrection of Christ; because that was the finishing of that work. And this is the day whereon Christ rested and was refreshed, after he had endured those extreme labours which he endured for our perishing souls. This was the day of the gladness of Christ's heart; it was ^{103b} the day of his deliverance from the chains of death, and also of our deliverance; for we are delivered in him who is our head. He, as it were, rose with his elect. He is the first-fruits; those that are Christ's will follow. Christ, when he rose, was justified as a public person, and we are justified in him. This is the day of our deliverance out of Egypt. We should therefore meditate on this with joy; we should have a sympathy with Christ in his joy. As he was refreshed on this day, so we should be refreshed, as those whose hearts are united with his. When Christ rejoices, it becomes all his church every where to rejoice. – We are to say of this day, "This is the day that the Lord has made; we will

rejoice and be glad in it.”

But we are not only to commemorate the resurrection of Christ, but the whole work of redemption, of which this was the finishing. We keep the day on which the work was finished, because it is in remembrance of the whole work. – We should on this day contemplate the wonderful love of God and of Christ, as expressed in the work of redemption; and our remembrance of these things should be accompanied with suitable exercises of soul with respect to them. When we call to mind the love of Christ, it should be with a return of love on our part. When we commemorate this work, it should be with faith in the Saviour. And we should praise God and the Lamb for this work, for the divine glory and love manifested in it, in our private and public prayers, in talking of the wonderful works of God, and in singing divine songs.

Hence it is proper that Christ’s disciples should choose this day to come together to break bread, or to celebrate the ordinance of the Lord’s supper, Acts xx. 1, because it is an ordinance instituted in remembrance of the work of redemption.

5. Works of mercy and charity are very proper and acceptable to Christ on this day. They were proper on the ancient Sabbath. Christ was wont to do such works on the Sabbath-day. But they especially become the Christian Sabbath, because it is a day kept in commemoration of the greatest work of mercy and love towards us that ever was wrought. What can be more proper than that on such a day we should be expressing our love and mercy towards our fellow-creatures, and especially our fellow-Christians. Christ loves to see us show our thankfulness to him in such ways as these ...”.

We have been able to read Edwards’ whole sermon with the only Bible-Sabbath, the Seventh Day of the week, in mind. Wasn’t it wonderful! Isn’t it significant!

(Edwards’ last sentence reads, “*Therefore we find that the Holy Ghost was especially careful, that such works should be performed on the first day of the week in the primitive church, as we learn by our text*”. Understood in the light of conclusion reached in *The Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace*, “*such works*” as Edwards deems should be “*performed on the First Day of the week*”, in fact “*as we learn by our text*”, are such as should **be avoided on the Sabbath Day.**)

Appendix Romans 14:6a ‘Manuscripts’

... oor die egtheid van die frase in Romeine 14:6a, sien Nestlé se Novum Testamentum Graece en die bronne of 'Apparate' wat deur hom gebruik word. In sy voetnate by hierdie vers, verwys Nestlé na ‘Minuskeln’, “33plsy en hrd”, waarin die frase wél voorkom, terwyl dit in "EFGHSVYΩ und meisten Minuskeln", nie voorkom nie. Dit kom dus in geen Manuskule (vroegste) of in enige ander manuskripte voor nie. Die frase word dan ook weggelaat in Vertalings soos Mashall se Interlineêr, Modern Language, Living Bible en Revised Standard.

Poem by Horatius Bonar (1808-89)

This hallowed hour of fellowship with thee

Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And in my weariness upon thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song,
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting, still prolong
This hallowed hour of fellowship with thee.

Mine is the sin, but thine the righteousness;
Mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing blood;
Here is my robe, my refuge and my peace –
The blood, thy righteousness, O Lord my God.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb’s great bridal feast of bliss and love.

Could one not change, “my peace – The blood, thy righteousness,” to, “my peace – Thy life, thy righteousness”, and, “This hallowed hour”, to, “This hallowed day”?

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