

rest” (Mat 11:28).

Once again chapter 4 of Hebrews helps us understand. Verse 7 reads, *God set a certain day, calling it today: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”*. In the end it is only when you hear the voice of God for yourself that you can receive any blessing from him. But when you hear his voice you must respond. Verse 11 says: *“Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest”*. The pathway to rest is labour, not sleep.

Conclusion

We have seen then that keeping the weekly Sabbath day (Saturday) was a special covenant between God and the Jews. There were great blessings for those who kept it and severe penalties for those who defiled it. To observe Sunday as a holy day is simply to turn from Judaism to paganism. The Jewish Sabbath is a type or picture of our spiritual rest. The time for that rest is now. The six days, picturing six thousand years of man’s labour and toil, are now complete, and we stand at the threshold of the day of the Lord - God’s Sabbath day.

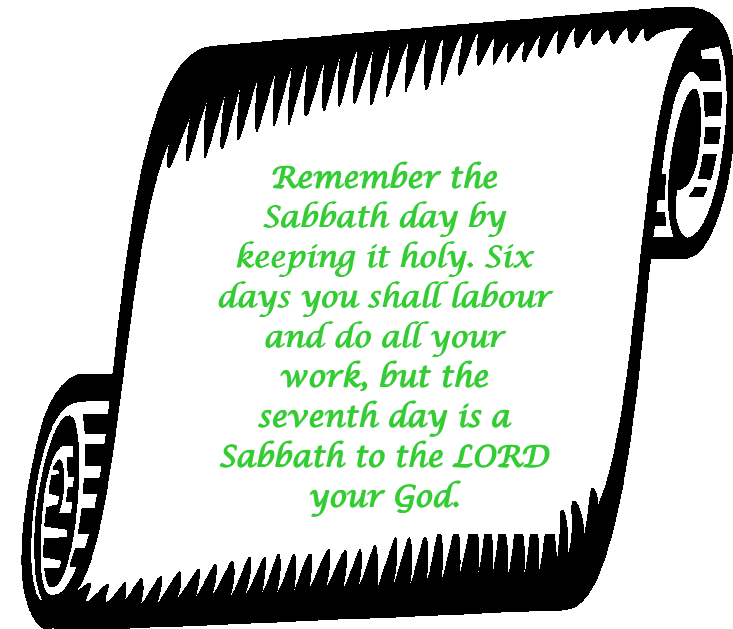
We live in a day of special opportunity. Truths that were hidden from previous generations are being revealed to ours. Before us *a door stands open in heaven and a voice like a trumpet says, “Come up”*. The Spirit and the bride say, *“Come”*. We may set aside unbelief, fear and doubt and go forward into the fullness of God’s purposes for us; or we may cling to our traditions and refuse the light.

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Sabbath Rest



*There remains, then,
a Sabbath-rest for the
people of God*

Moses was the rule of the patriarchs. Moses brought in the age of the law, which lasted till Jesus who brought in the age of grace. This in its turn gives place to the kingdom age or age of rest, which we have been considering. Each age represents a development in God's purposes and dealings with man, and a day of greater opportunity.

Personal Rest

We live then in the time of Sabbath fulfilment. We are privileged to live in a time of greater revelation and spiritual opportunity than those who have gone before us. Am I implying by this that believers today are better than all that went before? Can we say that we are ahead of Moses, David, Isaiah, Peter, Paul and John because we were born later? Absolutely no. Everyone knows this is not so. Simply we live in a time of greater revelation and opportunity. Men of the spirit and of God in ages past have lived beyond the revelation of their time; while men of the flesh today, whatever they claim, may be ignorant of God's most fundamental dealings. Some in every age and place simply take the spiritual opportunities they are given. Others go further and reach forward and outwards beyond their time and surroundings. Others neglect their privileges and trust blindly that they are Abraham's children and all will be well.

Enoch lived so near the beginning of history and yet was a wonderful man of God. He was a man who **walked with God, and was not, because God had translated him.** Moses lived physically at the beginning of the age of law. In spirit can we doubt that one who ruled so wonderfully over God's people was living in the age of God's kingdom?

We cannot by-pass six thousand years of history in our experience, and immediately enter God's Sabbath rest. Spiritually as well as physically, I believe, God's children pass through infancy, childhood and adolescence to maturity. We cannot by-pass the law at Sinai, the wandering in the desert, the conquest of Canaan, the victories of David and Solomon, the captivity in Babylon and move directly to the birth of the Son of God. We cannot omit the Old Covenant and go straight into the new. We must labour for six days before we can enter our Sabbath rest.

Can you rest when you are not tired? When aging grandparents arrive at your house after a long journey you fairly soon ask them if they want to put their feet up. When a healthy young teenager arrives at the door in the morning, you'd hardly offer him the bedroom! Rest is for those who have worked hard and are tired. How well those beautiful words of Jesus apply, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you

Bible quotations are taken from the NIV or retranslated

time when it will be delivered from bondage and brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. When is this going to happen? The Apostle Peter made a definite statement about time in his second letter, “**But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as a day**” (2 Peter 3:8) Six days means six thousand years. One day means one thousand years. Six thousand years by God’s reckoning as recorded in scripture have now passed since the time of Adam¹. We are now at the beginning of the seventh thousand. Revelation chapter 20 speaks of a time when Satan will be bound for a thousand years. The seven days of creation described in Genesis are then a picture of six thousand years of man’s labour followed by one thousand years of Sabbath rest.

Six and numbers like 600, 6000 and 666 all relate consistently in scripture to man and his works. Noah was 600 years old when he entered the ark. He was at the beginning of the seventh 100 years of his life. His long building labours were then finished and he entered the ark, which was a place of rest. The name *Noah* itself means rest. After the flood he came out of the ark into a new age and time in God’s purposes.

The three great kings of Israel, Saul, David and Solomon can also stand in the witness box. Each reigned for forty years, and corresponds to a historical period¹. Saul pictures the Jewish period from the birth of Abraham till the time of Jesus. Like Saul the Jews ended in rejection. David corresponds to the church age, which has now run its course. David was the “beloved of the Lord” (as his name means), but he was a man of war. Solomon depicts the age we are now entering. I believe it will be characterised by peace - the meaning of his name - as well as wisdom, prosperity and long life - the three gifts God gave him. In his own words, “**But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster**” (1 Kings 5:4). In Hebrew this reads as *there is no Satan*, which corresponds remarkably with the picture in Revelation of Satan being bound.

Students of scripture have divided time into various ages or dispensations in God’s dealings with man. Details of interpretation differ, but the main outlines are reasonably clear. From Adam to Noah mankind lived under conscience. There was no law or government. From Noah to

¹ It is very remarkable that both the Jewish period and the church period were exactly forty jubilees (fifty year periods) or two thousand (lunar) years, corresponding perfectly with the forty year reigns of Saul and David. We would expect Solomon to have reigned twenty years to correspond to the thousand years of peace. Possible explanations of this are beyond the scope of this article.

Introduction

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Exodus 20: 8-11

Thus saith the fourth commandment, and a lot of Bible reading people are not quite sure what they ought to do about it.

Some people are sure. There are areas of Jerusalem where your car will be stoned if you drive through them on the Shabbat (Hebrew for Sabbath - Saturday). Many lifts in buildings in Israel stop automatically on every floor on the Shabbat, because it would be work to raise your hand and press the button.

Many people in other countries will not do their gardening, go for a walk, or let their children play football on Sunday, because they do not want to defile the Sabbath (Sunday!). Some are involved in campaigns to stop other people from working on Sundays, be they Christian, or any other or no other religion.

Most Christians don’t go so far, but they still have a vague unease that perhaps they aren’t quite doing what they ought. Is it alright to go shopping on Sundays? Should they support campaigns to keep Sunday special?

The scriptures contain over 150 references to the Sabbath. In the time of Moses sabbath-breaking incurred the death penalty (Ex 31:15) and one man was stoned to death for gathering sticks on a sabbath day (Num 15:32-36).

In Isaiah, on the other hand, great blessings are promised to people who keep the Sabbath: “**If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a**

delight and the LORD's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob." The mouth of the LORD has spoken (58: 13, 14).

Jeremiah also issues stern warnings against working on the Sabbath day and promises of rich national blessing in return for keeping it holy (17: 19-27).

What does the scripture mean that says, "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God"? In all the confusion have we missed what God has to say to us? Can we afford to be ignorant on so important a subject?

Sunday

Our first problem is that the Old Testament clearly associates the Sabbath with the seventh day of the week, which everyone agrees is Saturday. Early in its history the church began to observe Sunday as its special day and has continued to do so in most, but not all countries until today.

Two scriptural reasons are given for this practice. Firstly people say that members of the early church always gathered together on the first day of the week. But did they? There is one reference in Acts chapter 20 verse 7 to a gathering on the first day of the week, and one reference in 1 Corinthians 16 verse 2 to laying aside one's money on the first day of the week. There is hardly evidence of a universal church practice of treating Sunday either as a day of rest or as a day of worship.

Further the literal translation of the Greek for *the first day of the week* is *the first (day) of the Sabbaths*¹. It is not at all certain that the phrase means Sunday. This relates to the second reason for observing Sunday, which is the traditional view that Jesus rose on a Sunday morning.

¹ The Greek is ἡ μὴ των σαββατων. Σαββατων is the genitive plural of σαββατων meaning sabbath. Leviticus 23:15,16 reads "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after theseventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD." It appears that Jesus rose on the first day of this seven week period.

water but blood!

Thus Jesus took Adam's curse (with every other curse) upon himself that we might receive the blessing of God's rest, and sit with him and share his throne.

When Can We Enter Rest?

We must now ask the question when can we enter this rest? Let's reread the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work ..." This is not one, but two commandments! The first is Remember the Sabbath day ... The second is Six days you shall labour The explanation follows: For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.

In God's purposes, everything has a time. There are times for individuals, times for communities, times for countries and times for the world at large. Two thousand years ago, when Jesus came to this earth, and lived and died and rose and ascended to the Father, it was the time for the gospel of salvation. He told the disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. For the world at large the gospel age had begun. However for most individual countries, communities and people the time was not yet. Slowly over the last two thousand years since then the gospel has spread to almost every corner of the globe, yet many individuals still have not heard of Jesus.

Just as there was a definite time when the gospel age began, and in a time for each individual to experience that gospel personally, there is also a time to enter the sabbath rest. We will consider first that time for the wider proclamation of this message, and then the time for individual personal experience.

The Wider Fulfilment

Hebrews 4: 9 states clearly, "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God". The writer appears to see it as future. In Romans 8 Paul also states that the whole creation is in travail waiting for a future

¹A full understanding of this statement is beyond the scope of this article. It involves a study of solar years, lunar years, jubilee periods reckoned as 50 years and time periods ignored in divine reckoning when the children of Israel were in servitude or captivity. I have written on this subject separately.

what he wanted to do, because his will was totally aligned to the will of God.

Jesus lived in total victory over the desires of the flesh. His body was his servant. When the spirit moved him to fast for forty days, he obeyed. He did not listen to his body's requests for food. When the important time came to choose his disciples he spent the whole night in prayer. Bodily requests for sleep were ignored. No doubt he felt the normal desires of sex, but he had a higher calling from God and for him they could not be fulfilled.

Wanting to please relations, friends or enemies never deflected him from God's will. His mother asked him to turn the water into wine before God's time came. His brothers wanted him to go up to the feast and reveal himself as Messiah. Peter wanted him to turn from the path of suffering and death. Always he quietly pursued his father's will, never deflected by fear of man's opinion or opposition.

How easily the flesh could have urged him to be another Moses, bringing greater and better laws; or another David freeing his country from the Roman yoke. He could have travelled the Roman empire like Paul did to spread his message further, rather than contenting himself with the small land of Israel. He could have left the obscurity of the carpenter's bench and started his ministry sooner and reached more people. But pride did not move him to any such action of the flesh. He was totally at rest in his Father's will.

A man that walks in the spirit and has gained victory over the flesh needs no rules to help him please God. He will pray without a regular quiet time out of his desire for communion with God. He will give without paying a regular tithe from the generosity and love in his heart. He will meet with other saints of God without a regular time and place of meeting through the mutual drawing together of the Holy Spirit.

Rules and regulations are necessary for babies and children in the faith, but there is a place of maturity in God where the believer enters rest. *There remains this Sabbath-keeping for the people of God.*

Was Jesus always at perfect rest? Was there never sweat on his brow? Nearly all his life he lived in perfect and unbroken communion with his Father. But there came a time when that communion was broken. The dark cloud of sin - not his, but ours - came between him and God. As that awful time approached his will began to be in conflict with his Father. "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22: 41, 43). His sweat was not

Some people say we should observe Sunday as the day Jesus rose from the dead. But did he rise on Sunday? In the gospels we find 3 different time phrases referring to the day of the resurrection.

Jesus said 3 times in Matthew and 3 times in Luke that he would rise again on the third day. Although these verses can be taken to mean Sunday as the third day from Friday, the problem is that several other verses in Matthew and Mark use the phrase *after 3 days*. Worse still from the traditional point of view Matthew chapter 12 verse 40 states clearly, **For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.** There is no way known to mathematics ancient or modern that you can fit 3 days and 3 nights between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning.

If Jesus died on Friday afternoon as most people accept, he must have risen sometime during Sunday night if he spent at least part of each of three days and three nights in the tomb. There is good evidence that he rose at Sunday midnight, making Monday the resurrection morning.

The Lord's Day

"Isn't Sunday the Lord's day?", some people will ask. Again this idea is based purely on church tradition. There is neither supporting Bible evidence for it nor any logical justification. The old testament prophets often spoke about the day of the Lord. They were never referring to a day of the week. They always meant a time of coming judgment for the unrighteous and deliverance for the Lord's people. In the New Testament there are many similar references, especially in Paul's writings referring to the coming and presence of Jesus. The phrase *the Lord's day* occurs only in the book of Revelation chapter 1 verse 10: **"I was in spirit on the Lord's Day ..."**. I take this to mean, **"In spirit I was transported in time to the Day of the Lord"**. (Transportation in space or time is not uncommon in Scripture. In Revelation 21: 10 John was carried in spirit to a great and high mountain.) The NIV changes the word order of this verse and inserts the article, translating it, **"On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit ..."**. This is twisting the verse and forcing it to mean that John was having a spiritual experience on a Saturday or Sunday morning! I can see nothing other than church tradition to justify this interpretation. There is then nothing anywhere in Scripture to connect the Lord's day with Sunday.

There is therefore no certain evidence that the early Christians met on Sunday. More important even than this, there is not a word in the New Testament to suggest that Sunday should replace Saturday as a day to be observed, either for rest or for worship.

The observance of Sunday came into the church after new testament times, along with many other pagan practices borrowed from the existing religions of the time. Christmas was originally the feast of the “Unconquered Sun” and was obviously related to sun worship. The observance of Sunday probably had the same pagan origin.

Shadow and Reality.

Should we then observe Saturday as our Sabbath day? Seventh Day Adventists and other lesser known sects do this.

The Apostle Paul certainly did not favour this. He made specific statements against observing any day. To the Galatians he wrote, *“You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you”* (Gal 4: 10,11).

To the Colossians he said, *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ”* (Col 2:16, 17).

The writer to the Hebrews expresses a similar thought in chapter 10 verse 1: *“The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming - not the realities themselves.”*

Both these last two quotations make the same vital point. The Sabbath, like the rest of the Jewish ceremonial law, was a shadow of the greater realities that were to come. We must understand the difference between shadow and reality. To the natural man, the things he can see, hear and touch are the reality. Spiritual things are far removed and belong to a shadowy unreal world. To God and to the spiritual man it is exactly the other way round. The things we can see, hear and touch are only shadows of the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm is real and lasting, while the natural realm will pass away.

The Old Covenant was based on visible sacrifices and ceremonies and rituals that were passing shadows. Jesus brought in the New Covenant, which is the spiritual reality. He perfectly fulfilled the law. A

Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat of it,” Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life... By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.

Because Adam gave way to the flesh, symbolised both in the woman Eve, and in the desire for food, he came under God’s curse. The central feature of this curse was that he must work. In other words work is not a blessing but a curse!

Adam was not idle before he fell. We may view him as one at rest, seated upon a throne and ruling over God’s creation. His work was the work of God, creative and imaginative rulership. From this exalted position he fell by giving way to the lusts of the flesh. **When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it** (Gen 3:6). As we have seen it is the conflict of the flesh and the spirit that destroys our rest.

Neither idleness nor hard servile labour are blessings. Happily we can see the beginnings of a world where neither of these things need be. Machinery is replacing human muscle in agriculture and industry. Mechanised travel takes away the drudgery of long journeys on foot. Computers remove the endless repetitive slog of calculating and adding up figures. Even as I write this the computer takes the mechanical strain of the task of writing and releases my brain for the creative work. Even in the natural realm we can see that we are moving into an age of rest - but more on that subject later.

The Last Adam - Rest Regained

Jesus is the perfect manifestation and embodiment of every virtue and experience. If we want to see and understand rest, or any other experience in God, we can do no better than to look at him. His life was the perfect expression of God’s sabbath rest.

Everything he did was based on an intuitive knowledge of and obedience to his Father’s will. In every situation he could do exactly

drive them further away from God.

Your meeting with other believers can be a time when Jesus is among you, or simply a time when you meet. The scriptures speak of both methods of getting together. Jesus said to the disciples, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I with them” (Mat 18:20). Paul said to the Corinthians, “You gather together not for the better but for the worse” (1 Cor 11:17). To the Thessalonians Paul spoke of our gathering together to Jesus (2 Thes 2:1). I need hardly say that some gatherings, large or small, are alive with the presence of God. Others are just dead.

Prayer can be living communion with God. It can also be a ritualistic duty that must be performed for a specified length of time each day.

The key to all this lies in the verse quoted from Hebrews chapter 4. For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Actions that proceed from the soul or natural man are our own works rather than the works of God. They may spring out of higher motives such as conscience or sense of duty or lower motives such as wanting to please man. Either way they are still essentially self-motivated, and in the end they are nothing but our own dead works.

Those actions that spring from the spirit within us are his works. How can we tell which is which? Only the word of God is sharp enough to divide between the two and separate them out. His word judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. We must not attempt to hide from that word, but must welcome it into our hearts and let it judge us. Only then will we rest from our own works and enter his.

The First Adam - Rest Lost

The apostle Paul speaks of two Adams. The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. (1 Cor 15: 45). Adam is Hebrew for man. History can be viewed as the story of just two men: the first man Adam who fell and brought the whole human race down with him; the second man Jesus who rose to restore all the first man had lost.

Among the things that the first Adam lost was the state of rest. This was the main feature of the curse God laid upon him for his disobedience. We find this in Genesis chapter 3. I will quote from verses 17 and 19:

shadow is an exact replica of an object, but is totally lacking in substance. It is of no value compared with the object itself even though it is identical in shape.

We may change the metaphor and say that the laws and events of the Old Covenant are like photographs. Photographs are both wonderful and useless! They introduce you to someone you’ve never met or remind you of someone you love, or recall a holiday or special occasion. But they are utterly valueless without the thing they represent. They are also nothing compared with the reality itself. You don’t gaze for hours at pictures of loved ones when they are sitting beside you.

That is the relationship of the Old Covenant to the New. The sacrificial lambs of the Old Covenant were valuable as pictures of the one great sacrifice of Jesus that was to come; but in themselves they were of no value. They were only pictures or shadows.

The flesh is the shadow, the spirit is the reality. The old people of Israel are the shadow. Those who are born by the Spirit of God are the reality. Earthly kingdoms are shadow, the kingdom of God is the reality. Nicodemus could see miracles take place in the flesh, but he could not see the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told him he must be born of the spirit of God if he wanted to be able to see it.

The ceremonial law that God gave to the Jews through Moses had no real value of its own. Its value lay in what it pointed to. God commanded animal sacrifices of various kinds. In Hebrews 10:4 we read, “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.” The animal sacrifices pointed forwards to the one great sacrifice that Jesus made of himself. The animal sacrifice was the shadow; the sacrifice of Jesus was the reality. Nowadays, therefore, we don’t sacrifice animals.

The same thing is true of the Sabbath. It was a covenant and sign between God and the Jewish people. Exodus 31: 16 and 17 says, “The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites for ever (or for the age), for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.”

No doubt it is beneficial to cease from one’s labours for one day in seven, but God has not commanded the whole human race to do so. He gave the Sabbath commandment to one special race whom he chose to use as his vehicle of revelation.

Hebrews 4: 9-12 (partly quoted on the front) reads as follows:

There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no-one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Please read these verses again carefully as they are critical to our understanding of this whole subject.

Clearly this Sabbath rest has nothing to do with keeping a weekly Sabbath. **We must enter and experience a spiritual rest, of which the weekly Sabbath was only a picture.**

A Spiritual Rest

We must now consider the nature of this spiritual Sabbath rest.

Religious people throughout history throughout the world have laboured long and hard to please God. The Jews observed the laws of the old testament often in great detail and with great diligence. When their consciences found no peace in their observances they added further ramifications to the laws and extended their scope in the hope that this would bring peace. The Pharisees were not content to tithe their money. They tithed every last vegetable that was growing in their gardens. It is not enough to keep the law, "*Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk*" (Exodus 23:19). An orthodox Jew will not take *any* milk and meat in the same meal or even within three hours to avoid even the slightest risk of breaking the law.

People of other religions obviously also strive hard to please God. Muslims fast for a whole month once a year between sunrise and sunset, and go on long pilgrimages to Mecca, which before the days of modern transport could have taken months or even years. They do this to please God.

Strict Catholics attend daily services, travel to distant shrines and holy places, pass countless beads through their fingers and recite endless

prayers, all to earn merit and please God. Tibetan Buddhists do very similar things.

Most of my readers will readily agree that all such activities are *dead works* or *the works of the flesh* or our *own works*, which cannot please God. God rested from all his works on the seventh day, and we also should cease from all such works of the flesh. Neither the old testament Jewish law, nor Roman Catholic rituals, nor any other ceremonies can satisfy a God who looks at the heart.

How then does the spiritual Sabbath rest apply to the more Bible-based believer who does not do such things? Rather his spiritual life revolves round prayer, Bible study, "witnessing", attending meetings, giving and perhaps fasting. Surely such activities could not be described as *dead works*? Surely we should not *rest* from these God-commanded activities?

Here we come to a paradox. The same outward activity can be a living act of faith or a dead work. Moses fasted forty days and received from God the foundation revelation of the whole scriptures. The Pharisees fasted twice a week and only increased their damnation. Jesus prayed and there were powerful manifestations of God. The Pharisees offered long prayers and nothing happened. The scriptures were a well of blessing to Paul and to those who read his exposition of them. For the Pharisees the same scriptures were the means of binding heavy burdens on the backs of their followers.

It is the same for us. The same outward action can be alive or dead. What is it that makes the difference? Simply, if the activity comes from the initiation and leading of the Holy Spirit it will be alive. If it comes out of our own natural energy and effort it will be dead.

You can read the Scriptures out of spiritual hunger and longing to know God, and he will bless you and meet with you. Or you can read them out of duty or wish to become an important person in the Christian world, and they will be no more interesting than a school history book. (I think school text books have improved since my day.) They will simply be the dead letter of the law.

You can speak to others of Jesus because, like Paul, you are constrained by the love of Christ and you have something precious you want to share with them. They will then be touched by the spirit of God in you. Or you can force yourself to "witness" to people in an attempt to obey the "commands of scripture" and to satisfy your conscience, and simply