

CHRIST AND THE SABBATH

J.J. (N.)—The example and precept of Christ have nothing to do with the observance of the first day of the week as a day of rest. This is due to the enactment of the Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, who legislated under the inspiration of the bishops of the Catholic Church. Their idea was that the law of the sabbath had been changed from the seventh to the first day. This was a mistake on their part, but it is a mistake that has had some happy effect in securing the general observance of a day of rest. Their mistake was founded on the apostolic appointment of the first day of the week as the day for the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ after his departure from their midst. There is no evidence that the apostles ever intended this as a substitution of the first for the seventh day in the sense of the sabbath. Their teaching (particularly that of Paul) goes against the practice of observing (Mosaic) sabbaths and feast days.—(Gal. 4:9, 10.) Paul's teaching is that these things were shadowy of the good things accomplished in Christ, and no longer binding on believers.—(Col. 2:16, 17.) The first day of the week is a day of special attendance on the things of Christ, but not a day of burden and prohibition like the Jewish sabbath. As to Christ who came to fulfil all righteousness and therefore the law, he taught the people to "observe and to" whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees taught as occupants of the seat of Moses.—(Matt. 23:2, 3.) Therefore he enjoined the observance of the sabbath, being himself "made under the law." His healing people on the sabbath day was not a breach of the sabbath law, though made a ground of accusation against him; for he justified it on the ground that the priests were *blameless of sabbath breach*, who waited on the altar or circumcised a child on the seventh day.—(Matt. 12:5; Jno. 7:23.) His defence was, "It is lawful to do WELL on the sabbath day." He appealed to the practice of the Jews themselves in the watering of their cattle or the rescue of sheep fallen into a pit on the sabbath day. If he had healed on the sabbath day in the spirit and with the intent of sabbath breaking, he would not have adopted this line of defence, but would have plainly contended that he was under no obligation to keep the sabbath. True, he said "The Son of Man is Lord *also* of the sabbath:" but he said this as an additional support to his reply and not as justifying a breach of the law he came to fulfil.

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¹ (2001). *The Christadelphian*, 12(electronic ed.), 474.