

# It's "Sabbath" or "Lord's Day" – not "Sunday"!

For the first day of the week, a great majority in the visible church, even in Scotland, have for all intents and purposes abandoned the use of the terminology *Sabbath* or *Lord's Day*, in favour of the secular term "*Sunday*". Invariably we see "*Sunday Services*" displayed on the notice-boards even of churches which, until a few years ago, were still considered relatively conservative in doctrine, worship and practice. With uninspired words (commonly known as "hymns") and musical instruments now sanctioned in the Free Church of Scotland, we also see a corresponding switch-over to the use of "*Sunday*", plus a general abandonment of reverential *thou*, *thee* and *thine* in favour of plain *you* when addressing the Most High in prayer. Along with a general moving away from the exclusive use of the Authorised (King James) version of the Holy Bible, all these features may be construed as being symptomatic of a general secularisation which, little by little, continues to permeate its way into the visible church.

In Exodus 20:8 we are instructed in the fourth commandment to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy". Now, God's holy law, contained in the Ten Commandments, still stands. Since the resurrection of Christ, until the end of the world, the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath in place of the seventh day (Shorter Catechism, Question 59). This is attested in Acts 20:7. It was "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread" and "Paul preached unto them". Also, the apostle John is on record as saying that he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10). Thus we have a clear warrant from Scripture to use either *Sabbath* or *Lord's Day* for the New Testament day of rest, but nowhere in the Bible does the word "*Sunday*" appear for God's holy day.

Of the two designations, *Sabbath* occurs far more frequently in Scripture than does *Lord's Day* (which occurs only once). This helps to remind us of the one glorious gospel under the two dispensations of the Old and New Testaments, corresponding with the "Creation Sabbath" and the "Resurrection Sabbath". Using *Sabbath* as well as *Lord's Day* also helps to guard us from the error of Dispensationalism, and accords with the sound doctrine of Covenant Theology. As it is the equivalent word for *Sabbath* that is used in the Old Testament Hebrew and in the New Testament Greek, it is incumbent upon us to stay as close as possible to the meaning of the original word. In no stretch of the imagination can "*Sunday*" be seen to have the same meaning as *Sabbath*, which automatically speaks of a day of rest

from secular activity. Hence we have the associated word *sabbatical*, meaning “time out” or a “ceasing from work”.

Those who call the Sabbath day “*Sunday*” are in effect helping to rob God’s holy day of its sanctity, and secularising it to having a rank no higher than any other day of the week. They are relegating it to being just another ordinary day in which it is “business as usual”. How can we expect the world to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy when so many in the visible church no longer do? In English, the days of the week are named after celestial bodies and false deities from pagan times. Thus the replacement of *Sabbath* (or *Lord’s Day*) in favour of “*Sunday*”, especially within the pale of the visible church, can only be construed as being yet another piece of Satan’s armoury used in an attempt to bring down the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word “*Sunday*” also falls in with all the other non-biblical terms so commonly associated with today’s modern visible church, such as “*Christmas*”, “*Advent*”, “*Epiphany*”, and “*Lent*”, which have crept back into use even in Scotland, after being abolished at the time of the Reformation. As for the other six days of the week, Scripture remains silent as to what they should be called.

In maintaining the Regulative Principle, it is incumbent upon us all to use the terms *Sabbath* or *Lord’s Day* and to refrain from using “*Sunday*”. As we are reminded in Jeremiah 6:16, “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls”. May we see a return to these old paths, in the visible church and in the nation.

*Alan Boyd, for the Sabbath Observance Committee.*