

Heidelberg Catechism (1563)	Orthodox Catechism (1680)
Q. 103: What doth God require in the fourth commandment?	Q. 115: What are we taught by the fourth commandment?
<p>Answer: First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God to hear His word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a Christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me; and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.</p>	<p>That one day in seven be kept in the worship of God. Under the Old Testament this was the last day of the week, but under the gospel changed to the first day of the week. The Lord’s Day is to be spent in private and public devotion, hearing the word diligently, practicing the gospel-sacraments zealously, doing deeds of charity conscionably, and resting from servile works, except for cases of necessity. This was the laudable practice of the holy Apostles, who best knew the mind of Christ as to the time of worship. We do not find in all the New Testament that any gospel church in the Apostle’s time set any other day apart solemnly to worship God but the first day. This they were right to do. For if Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, was to keep the seventh day to keep up the remembrance of their deliverance out of temporal bondage, how much more are we bound to keep the first day in remembrance of Christ’s deliverance of us from eternal bondage.</p>

Introduction– “If you want to destroy Christianity, you have to destroy the Sabbath” – *Voltaire*

- I. Preliminary Matters–Terminology–In Reformed Tradition
- II. Different Views of Sabbath in Reformed Thought
 - A. Big Eva View of the Sabbath–Basically Dispensational–Major Discontinuity
 - B. Variety of Views within the Reformed Tradition (Puritan and Continental)
 - 1. Two Views of the Sabbath in Reformed Thought
 - a. **Puritan View** (aka “British” or “Westminsterian”)
 - b. **Continental View** (i.e., the Dutch Reformed Tradition)
 - 3. Distinctive elements between the two Views

Continental View	Puritan View
1. More <i>discontinuity</i> between OT and NT Sabbaths	1. More <i>continuity</i> between OT and NT Sabbaths
2. More laxed regarding <i>rules</i> for Sabbath	2. More rigid regarding rules for Sabbath
3. Greater tolerance for <i>recreation</i>	3. Less tolerance for <i>recreation</i>
4. Corporate worship is <i>priority</i> of the day	4. Corporate <i>and</i> private worship <i>and</i> rest <i>and</i> everything else done on day is priority
5. Apart from corporate worship, what one does or does not do is more left to liberty of conscience	5. Apart from corporate worship, what one does or does not do is more regulated

4. Some Qualifications

- C. Hercules Collins and the Particular Baptists
- III. A Quick and Dirty Biblical Theology of the Shift from Sabbath to Lord's Day
 - A. The Sabbath is a creation ordinance patterned after God's creation rest (Gen. 2:2-3; Exod. 20:8-11; Mark 2:27; Heb. 4:4).
 - B. The Sabbath is partly ceremonial (read "typological") and partly moral
 - C. When Jesus comes, he fulfills the "already" dimension of the eschatological promise and changes the day accordingly
 - D. It still remains to enter the final eschatological rest so there is still a day to point to it
 - E. The specific eschatological sign of the Lord's Day is exclusively for believers, not unbelievers
 - F. Lord's Day as *market day of the Soul* and *a welcome to the embassy of heaven*
- IV. Practical Considerations
 - A. The Non-negotiable of the Lord's Day is corporate worship
 - B. Apart from that, how do we think about what we do on the rest of the day?

Appendix 1: Recommended Reading with Annotations by Lee Irons

Carson, D. A., ed. *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*. Wipf and Stock, 1999. Originally published by Zondervan, 1982. Although the authors argue that the Lord's Day is not a new covenant Sabbath, there is much helpful material in this volume, including an exegetically insightful article by Andrew Lincoln entitled, "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament."

Cullmann, Oscar. *Early Christian Worship*. SCM Press, 1953. Argues convincingly that the Lord's Day was established by Christ as a day of Christian worship by means of the post-resurrection appearances. I am indebted to Cullmann's argument that the post-resurrection appearances of Christ established the basic contours of the early church's conception of the purpose and nature of the Lord's Day. I also find attractive his exegesis of the Maranatha prayer, with its wedding of the sacramental and eschatological perspectives.

Dennison, James T., Jr. *The Market Day of the Soul: The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath in England (1532-1700)*. Soli Deo Gloria. Examines the Puritan view in contrast with both Seventh-Day Sabbatarianism and the Anglican position. Valuable resource for quotes and documentation of the historical background of the Puritan doctrine of the Sabbath.

Gaffin, Richard B., Jr. "A Sabbath Rest Still Awaits the People of God." In *Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the OPC*. Ed. by Charles G. Dennison and Richard C. Gamble. Committee for the Historian of the OPC, 1986. Some of the ideas presented in this paper are dependent on Gaffin's formulations, e.g., the role of the Sabbath within the already/not-yet eschatological framework; and the pilgrim motif in connection with the wilderness experience of the covenant community between the exodus and the promised land. However, I would argue that Gaffin's wonderfully eschatological exposition of the Sabbath raises questions about the traditional understanding of the nature and role of the Decalogue as a summary of the eternal moral law of God, questions that Gaffin does not appear to have sufficiently wrestled with.

_____. *Calvin and the Sabbath: The Controversy of Applying the Fourth Commandment*. Mentor, 1998. Gaffin explains and critiques Calvin's continental view, and offers his own eschatological understanding in chapter 5 (this chapter also includes a valuable excursus on Vos's eschatological conception of the Spirit).

Jewett, Paul K. *The Lord's Day: A Theological Guide to the Christian Day of Worship*. Eerdmans, 1971. Similar position as the D. A. Carson volume.

Kline, Meredith G. *Kingdom Prologue*. Two Age Press, 2000.

Muether, John. "The OPC and the Sabbath." Taped lecture given in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the OPC (June, 1996). Write to Danny Olinger for a copy (deo@opcjst.com).

Muether sets the context by dealing with the American Victorian Sabbath, and compares the views of Murray and Kline.

Murray, John. *Principles of Conduct*. Eerdmans, 1957.

OPC. "The Report of the Committee on Sabbath Matters" (www.opc.org/GA/sabbath.html).

Owen, John. "Concerning a Day of Sacred Rest." In vol. 2 of *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Banner of Truth Trust, 1990. Owen helpfully traces the history of the Sabbath in the various epochs of covenant history. His sensitivity to the historical development of the Sabbath revelation enables him to see more clearly than most Puritans the sharp differences between the rigor of the old covenant Sabbath compared with the relative freedom of the new covenant Sabbath.

Pipa, Joseph A. *The Lord's Day*. Christian Focus, 1997. A defense of the traditional Puritan view.

Beckwith, Roger T., and Wilfrid Stott. *This Is the Day: The Biblical Doctrine of the Christian Sunday in its Jewish and Early Christian Setting*. Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1978. Very helpful historical study of Sabbath theology in the church fathers.

Turretin, Francis. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Vol. 2, pp. 77-104. Turretin takes a via media between the strict Sabbatarians of his day (the Voetians) and the Continental view (as represented by the Cocceians).

Appendix 2: Continental View of the Sabbath according to Dort:¹

“164th Session on May 17, 1619:

1. There is in the fourth commandment of the divine law a ceremonial and a moral element.
2. The ceremonial element is the rest of the seventh day after creation, and the strict observance of that day imposed especially on the Jewish people.
3. The moral element consists in the fact that a certain definite day is set aside for worship and so much rest as is needful for worship and hallowed meditation.
4. The Sabbath of the Jews having been abolished, the day of the Lord must be solemnly hallowed by Christians.
5. Since the times of the apostles this day has always been observed by the old catholic church.
6. This day must be so consecrated to worship that on that day we rest from all servile works, except those which charity and present necessity require; and also from all such *recreations as interfere with worship.*”

¹ As cited in Howard B. Spaan, *Christian Reformed Church Government* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1968), p. 208

Appendix 3: Two Different Reformed *Emphases* on the Sabbath

Continental View	Puritan View	
Heidelberg Catechism (HC)–1 <i>Question</i>	Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC)–6 <i>Questions</i>	Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC)–7 <i>Questions</i>
<p>Q. 103: What doth God require in the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. First, that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained; and that I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God to hear His word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor, as becomes a Christian. Secondly, that all the days of my life I cease from my evil works, and yield myself to the Lord, to work by His Holy Spirit in me; and thus begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.</p>	<p>Q. 57. Which is the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 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.</p>	<p>Q. 115. Which is the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested in the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it.</p>
	<p>Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.</p>	<p>Q. 116. What is required in the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The fourth commandment requireth of all men the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his Word, expressly one whole day in seven; which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the</p>

		<p>resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world; which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called The Lord's day.</p>
	<p>Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?</p> <p>A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.</p>	<p>Q. 117. How is the sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified?</p> <p>A. The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful; and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship: and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.</p>
	<p>Q. 60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?</p> <p>A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and</p>	<p>Q. 118. Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors?</p>

	<p>recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.</p>	<p>A. The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.⁶²</p>
	<p>Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.</p>	<p>Q. 119. What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are, all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them; all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful; and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.</p>
	<p>Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his</p>	<p>Q. 120. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it?</p> <p>A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment, the more to enforce it, are taken from the equity of it, God allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one for</p>

	<p>own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.</p>	<p>himself in these words, Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: from God's challenging a special propriety in that day, The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: from the example of God, who in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: and from that blessing which God put upon that day, not only in sanctifying it to be a day for his service, but in ordaining it to be a means of blessing to us in our sanctifying it; Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.</p>
		<p>Q. 121. Why is the word Remember set in the beginning of the fourth commandment?</p> <p>A. The word Remember is set in the beginning of the fourth commandment, partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it, and, in keeping it, better to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion; and partly, because we are very ready to</p>

		<p>forget it, for that there is less light of nature for it, and yet it restraineth our natural liberty in things at other times lawful; that it cometh but once in seven days, and many worldly businesses come between, and too often take off our minds from thinking of it, either to prepare for it, or to sanctify it; and that Satan with his instruments labours much to blot out the glory, and even the memory of it, to bring in all irreligion and impiety.</p>
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