

Note to the Reader

This little volume will please hardly anybody. It hardly pleases me!

Sabbatarians will be appalled. Actually, some might be mightily – but secretly – relieved or even pleased. It will put the matter beyond all doubt: ‘David Gay is a rank antinomian. His works are dangerous. Avoid him like the plague’. On that score, however, I am unrepentant. As I made clear in my *Sabbath Questions: An open letter to Iain Murray*, the sabbath day was the Jewish rest day, the seventh day of the week, lasting from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.¹ It was the special marker given to Israel by God to distinguish that nation from all other people. Further, having given the sabbath to Israel as a predicting shadow of Christ, God brought it to an end (along with all the other shadows) when Christ fulfilled the old covenant and abolished it. Thus the believer has no more to do with the sabbath as a day of observance than he has to do with offering a sacrifice, consulting a priest, attending the temple, keeping the Passover, observing the feasts, and such like.

Nevertheless, the believer is not sabbath-less. He most definitely has a sabbath. Of course he does! The believer’s sabbath is the Lord Jesus himself. The believer has spiritual rest in Christ. He entered this rest at his conversion, and he will enjoy it to the full in eternity.

And that signals the end of all talk of ‘the sabbath’ in my book. Or should do. Alas, law men insist on an invention: ‘the Christian sabbath’. And they use it as a principal weapon in their determination to hold believers in the grip of the law. But that is all ‘the Christian sabbath’ is – an invention. It is a figment, dreamed up by... Now that’s an interesting question! Who coined the term? Who first called Sunday ‘the Christian sabbath’? If it is true that the first

¹ See also my *Sabbath Notes; Essential*.

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mention of Sunday as a day of rest can be found in Origen in AD220, does that mark the origin of ‘the Christian sabbath’? Or do we have to look to the English Puritans for it? Who knows? Does any law man know? They will look in vain in Scripture for it.

For these reasons, this volume has nothing to do with the sabbath. While I do use the word occasionally, it is only to make a comparison (or, more often, a contrast) with the old covenant. So much for sabbatarians. They will not like this volume; that is, if they even bother to read it.

But if my work will appal sabbatarians, it will sadden many of my new-covenant theology friends. Some will suspect that I am drifting back into law, thinking I have not yet come to full liberty in Christ, or, at best, I am wobbly on it. Others, however, will feel that I have been too lax, straying from the safe and tested paths of institutionalism. Ah well!

So why publish? For two reasons. *First*, I cannot leave my work on the sabbath and the Lord’s day where it is.² I have said I am a Lord’s day man, and I owe it to the public to explain what I mean by that. Hence, in the words of my subtitle, this little volume is my ‘personal statement’. *Secondly*, I hope this work might make a useful contribution to an important debate. It may only be, as the subtitle makes clear, ‘a modest proposal’, but it is, for all that, a proposal.

Finally, I thank Stephen E. Atkerson for his very warm Foreword. Over many years, Steve has been vigorously promulgating the glories of the new covenant, the liberty believers have in Christ – both individually and corporately. It encourages me, therefore, to know that he is willing to associate his name with such a work as this.

² With my *Sabbath Questions; Sabbath Notes; Essential; Horne*.