

Hard Nuts Cracked

Harold Marshall Sylvester Richards

"How long shall they utter and speak hard things?" Psalms 94:4.

THE SOUTHERN
Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee

1950

(Printed in U. S. A.)

OUR ATTENTION has been called to a little leaflet entitled "Hard Nuts for Seventh-day Adventists," which is being used to confuse the minds of those who are instructed in their duty to obey the Lord by observing the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. There is nothing new in the so-called "Hard Nuts." They are neither original nor convincing, and when examined, they are found to be mere quibbles, or to grow out of misapprehensions of the true teaching of the Scriptures.

By using the good Bible nut-cracker we will soon see that these "Hard Nuts" are but empty shells! The "Nuts" are here presented (bold type) and cracked, as follows:

1. Sabbath Before Sinai

Where is the proof that any man ever kept the seventh day, except by special commandment, prior to the proclamation of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai? (Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 16. 1-30; 19:1-25; 20:1-17.)

In the first place let us remember that it would make no difference in the case if no such proof could be found. We are living this side of Sinai, and there is no denying the fact that the seventh day was the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments which were spoken by the Lord's own voice and written with His own finger at that time.

But the proof demanded is not lacking. To deny the observance of the Sabbath before Mount Sinai is to charge God with asking an absurdity; for how could man be expected to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8) if he had not previously known its blessings? That the law of the Sabbath was well known before its proclamation at Sinai is further shown in that the Lord brought a test concerning this commandment upon His people in the wilderness, before they came to Sinai, to prove them "whether they will walk in My law, or no." (Exodus 16:4, 5, 22-26) A comparison of Exodus 16:1 with Exodus 19:1 shows this to have been a month before the children of Israel arrived at Sinai. The apostle Paul proves that the law of God was in existence before it was spoken at Sinai, from the admitted fact that sin was in the world before that time, since "sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Romans 5:11) The Sabbath, which is included in the law rehearsed at Sinai, was instituted at creation. (Genesis 2:2, 3.) Those, therefore, who like Abraham (Genesis 26:5) kept the Lord's commandments, statutes, and laws, were observers of the seventh-day Sabbath.

Hard Nuts Cracked

After the institution of the Sabbath, the Book of Genesis in its brief record of 2,370 years does not again mention the Sabbath.

But this does not imply that the Sabbath was not kept, for the Sabbath is not mentioned from Moses to David, a period of 500 years, during which it was enforced by the death penalty.

The language of an age is unerring testimony of the existing habits of life. Now, in scores of different languages and dialects, many of them wholly unrelated to the Hebrew language, and some of them the languages of times before the giving of the law at Sinai, the week was not only seven days long, but the last day of the week was, and in many instances still is, actually called Rest Day, or Sabbath.

Witness the following words, each of which was the name for the seventh day of the week and each of which means in its respective language, Sabbath, or Rest Day:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Ancient Syriac | Shab-ba-tho |
| Italian | Sabato, Sabbato |
| Arabic | As-sabt |
| Hungarian | Szombat |
| Assyrian | Sa-ba-tu |
| Spanish | Sabado |
| Hindustani | Shamba |
| Armenian | Shapat |
| Persian | Shambih |
| Turkish | Yorn-es-sabt |
| Malayan | Hari Sabtu |
| Votiak, Russia | Subbota |
| Portuguese | Sabbado |
| French | Samedi |
| High German | Samstag |
| Bohemian | Sobota |
| Prussian | Sabatico |

To which many more might be added. But we need name no more until the writer of the tract under discussion has satisfactorily "cracked" these 17 "nuts" which we respectfully hand back to him.

If the seventh day was not recognized as the Sabbath, the Rest Day, not only in those ancient times to which the question relates, but clear up into modern times and by practically all peoples of the earth, how does it come that they called the seventh "rest day."

2. Observance Of The Sabbath

If Christians are required to keep the seventh day, why do you depart from your dwellings on that day, seeing those to whom the law was given were plainly commanded not to? (Exodus 16:29.)

We are not now living under the theocracy or under the ceremonial law; but the lapse of the theocracy and the ceremonial observances does not in any way affect the obligation to keep the fourth commandment in harmony with the interpretation Jesus placed upon it.

This command, "Let no man go out of his place," applied to the gathering of manna. (Exodus 16:11-31.) It was the custom of God's people to visit the prophets of God for instruction on the Sabbath. (2 Kings 4:21) We follow the example of Christ, who went to religious meetings on the Sabbath, and do it for the same reason (Luke 4:16), which we deem a sufficient reply.

Hard Nuts Cracked

3. The Seventh Day

**If you keep one Sabbath-the seventh day-why not keep all, the seventh year and the year of jubilee?
Who authorized you to make a distinction in favor of the seventh day? (Leviticus 25:1-22.)**

The seventh year and the year of jubilee are not mentioned in the Ten Commandments. They were to be kept only "in the land", of Israel and were not once kept in the wilderness before they entered Canaan. They are parts of that "law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15), which ended at the cross.

4. Sabbath In Arctic Regions

**If Christians are required to keep the Sabbath, how are they to live in cold climates?
(Exodus 35:1-3.)**

By keeping it as Christ taught it to be kept, there will be no difficulty. "The Sabbath was made for man." Mark 2:27, 28. This prohibition against fires applied only in the desert of Sinai where the weather was warm and the Lord fed them with manna. It could not apply even in the land of Canaan where the cold winters made fire necessary and the celebration of the Passover with the roasting of a lamb would often conflict with this prohibition had it been in effect. There were certain laws peculiar only to the Hebrews while they were in the wilderness (such were all those precepts that related to the manna, the building and setting up of the tabernacle, the manner of encampment about it, etc.); of this class were all the statutes given from the time that Moses brought down the second tables of stone until the events related in the close of the Book of Exodus, unless these words under consideration form an exception. And so we pass on to the next question.

5. Sabbath Violation

**Is it the duty of Christians to put to death those who desecrate the seventh day? (Numbers 15:32-36.)
If yes, who will be the public executioner? If not, what will you do with the law? (Exodus 35:2.) If you
say that the penalties are abolished, I answer that the same passages that you use to prove this
establish beyond a doubt that the law, too, is abolished.**

The answer is, No! The balance of the clause needs no comment since this question, like the previous ones, is an attempt to confuse the numerous national laws with the small group of 10. Blasphemy, at that time, was punishable with death. (Leviticus 24:16)

The death penalty for this evil has also been abolished. Would the tract-writer also argue that blasphemy against God is no longer wrong because the death penalty has been done away, just as he argues that the desecration of the Sabbath of God is now proper because the penalty has been abolished? The same question can be asked concerning other unrighteous acts that were punishable by death under the Mosaic law.

6. Jesus and The Sabbath

**If Christians are under obligations to keep the seventh day, why did Jesus declare that all law and
prophecy hang on love instead of the Sabbath, seeing the command to keep it is the one on which you
hang your everlasting all? (Matthew 22:34-40; Romans 13:8-10.)**

This is certainly a remarkable bit of reasoning! We might supply a little more of the same kind and inquire, "If Christians are under obligations not to bear false witness against their neighbors, why did Jesus declare that all law and prophecy hang on love instead of the ninth commandment?" And we could apply that to all 10 of the commandments. But the real answer is found in the following words: "He that said, I know Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." 1 John 2:4. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous." 1 John 5:2, 3.

Hard Nuts Cracked

7. The Rich Young Ruler

Why did Jesus not require the young ruler to keep the Sabbath when enumerating the commandments? (Matthew 19:16-20; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-24.)

It is hard to escape the conviction that the writer of "Hard Nuts" is guilty of willfully attempting to confuse and mislead his readers. If there is any force at all in this question No. 7, it must rest upon the implied fact that Jesus mentioned the other nine commandments, omitting only the fourth commandment. But this implication is not true. By reading Matthew 19:16-22 we find that Jesus made no direct reference whatever to any of the first four commandments or to the tenth. Does this mean that it is proper to have other gods, or make graven images and worship them, to take the name of the Lord in vain, and to covet? Of course any sane person repudiates such a conclusion. But this reasoning is just as sound as that which leads to the conclusion that Jesus did not regard it necessary for the young man to keep the Sabbath. Jesus was then a loyal Sabbath-keeper.

8. The Apostles In Jerusalem

If Christians are to keep the law of Moses the Sabbath-why did the apostles and elders who met at Jerusalem leave it out of their address to the churches? (Acts 15:1-29.) This case finds, in some respects, a parallel in your theorizing. Judaizing teachers had gone forth declaring to the brethren that unless they would submit to circumcision and keep the law of Moses they could not be saved. The apostles said, "We have no such commandment."

In the first place it is the law of the Lord, and not the law of Moses, in which the Sabbath commandment is found; but passing this effort to belittle God's law, we call attention to the fact that this address to the churches does not contain an enumeration of all the duties of Christians. We ask those who urge the omission of the fourth commandment from this address to the churches as an argument against the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, "If Christians are to refrain from idolatry, from profane swearing, from lying, and from coveting, why were these prohibitions left out of this address?" An argument which proves too much, proves nothing.

9. The Example of Jesus Christ

If Christians are required to keep the Sabbath, how are we to account for the open violation of the law by Jesus Christ, who is our example, unless by saying that the power that made the law can take it away, and that He did it? (Matthew 12:1-8; John 7:22, 23.)

In his anxiety to escape the obligation to observe the Sabbath of the Lord this writer seems to hesitate at nothing. He even charges Jesus with openly violating God's law, in order that he may make an argument against the observance of the law in our time. But let Jesus speak for Himself: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 15:10. Jesus challenged the Jews to cite any instance in His life where He had transgressed the law of God (John 8:46), and we pass on the challenge to the writer of this leaflet. It is quite true that Jesus refused to be bound by the traditions and manmade regulations which were taught in His day; and if Christians would do the same now, they would repudiate the Sunday Sabbath just as He repudiated what the Pharisees had added to the Sabbath commandment in His day; but to charge Him with open violation of the law of God is to make a false accusation against Him. It is a terrible thing for transgressors of God's law in this day to attempt to hide behind the baseless claim that in so doing they are following the example of Jesus. We entertain a more exalted idea of the character of our Savior than to declare that He was a violator of the law of God, His Father. Jesus kept the law of God in His own flesh that He might keep it in our flesh, as we exercise faith in Him as the very life of our life. "He that said he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." 1 John 2:6. Christ kept the seventh-day, and His followers should do the same.

Hard Nuts Cracked

10. The Law Of Circumcision

If you keep the Sabbath because, as you think, it was kept before the law of Moses, why do you not practice circumcision, seeing it is plainly commanded in those ages?

(Genesis 17:1-14; Galatians 5:1-6.)

We keep the Sabbath because it is one of the precepts of the eternal, unchangeable moral law of God, which Paul declares to be "holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12); but we do not practice circumcision, because it was one of the national rites of the Jews and part of the ceremonial law which was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). "Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." 1Corinthians 7:18, 19.

When did patriarch, prophet, apostle, or anybody else, command any Gentile to keep the law of Moses? No dodging here. Proof! Proof! Proof!

Before exposing the glaring fallacy in this question we will present the tract-writer with a counter question which will be an infinitely harder "nut" to crack than the much-punctuated one he has propounded. Here it is "When did anybody of authority command anybody either to keep Sunday, or to keep no day, or to refrain from observing the seventh day? No dodging here. Proof! Proof! Proof?"

This question is based on the fallacious assumption that if a command of God was observed by the Jews it does not apply to other races. The Ten Commandments which this tract-writer persists in calling "the law of Moses" were and are the words of God; for the Bible says, just before quoting the Ten Commandments, "God spoke all these words." (Exodus 20:1-17) The law of God applies to all the world. (Romans 3:19) "Now we know that what things so ever the law said, it said to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." No man is guilty "before God" unless the law applies to his case.

Furthermore, all men are to be judged by the law which forbids murder and adultery. (James 2:10-12) This is then the Ten Commandment law. But men are not judged by a law which they are under no obligation to obey. Therefore all men are under obligation to obey the Ten Commandment law, for James declares they will be judged by it.

11. The Ministration Of Death

Paul says the ministration of death written and engraved in stones (Exodus 20:1-17; 31:18; 32:15, 16; 34:1-28) was done away (2 Corinthians 3:1-18). When, where, and by whom was it brought back into force? Name the day, the age, the authority, and give proof from the Book! If your doctrine is true, the great Apostle of the Gentiles stands convicted of a mistake!

There is no evidence furnished by the tract-writer that Paul referred here to the fourth, or Sabbath, command any more than to the other nine. Of course this opponents of the Sabbath means to quote the Apostle Paul as authority for the position that the Ten Commandments written upon stone have been done away, although this same apostle writes in Romans 7:12: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." The context of 2 Corinthians 3:1-18 shows that the contrast is not between the law in force and the law done away, but between the law written in stone and the law written in the heart. Inasmuch as this question is based upon a perversion of the text, it does not require any further answer.

Hard Nuts Cracked

12. The First Day Of The Week

**If the early Christians kept the Sabbath, why did they break bread on the first day of the week?
(Acts 20:7)**

The supposed force of this inquiry must lie in the assumption that to break bread on the first day of the week was sufficient to show that the Sabbath had been changed from the seventh to the first day of the week. But this is pure assumption, having no scriptural basis.

But since, weak and void of proof as it is, it is the strongest support that can be raked up for observing the first day, we will take time to expose the fallacy, just as though the event were really an important one instead of the mere breaking of bread without any suggestion that it was a celebration of the Lord's Supper or in any way an established procedure.

In the first place we wonder if the writer of the tract realized that the meeting in question was not on what is now known as Sunday at all, but was at the time we now speak of as Saturday night, or Saturday evening!

According to the Bible method of reckoning time, each day began at sundown. (Leviticus 23:32; Mark 1:32) Hence the evening of the first day was the evening preceding the first day, and not the evening following the first day, which was part of the second day. The meeting was therefore on the evening after the Sabbath, now known as Saturday evening. And to make matters worse for those who try to see in this some evidence that Paul was then keeping the first day, the record plainly reads that Paul was then planning to travel the next day! This he would not have done at all if their supposition were correct that he was then a Sunday observer!

Should the writer insist upon our using in this single particular instance the Roman reckoning of time, in order to help out in his impossible quest for evidence for Sunday keeping, he will then get into still deeper difficulties, for the principal feature of the meeting, the breaking of bread, took place after midnight and hence on Monday, and Monday would be the day he should observe if he prefers to follow such flimsy inferences! After all there is nothing in the Scriptures to show that the celebration of the Lord's Supper was confined to any particular day of the week.

13. The Gentile Christians

If Christians are to keep the Sabbath day, how do you account for the fact that the apostles preached the gospel in Jerusalem, Samaria, to Cornelius the Gentile, and to many others, without commanding a single individual to keep it? Did they under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, fail to properly instruct their converts? (Acts 2:1-47; 8. 1-40; 16:1-40.)

But we ask: "If Christians are to keep Sunday, how do you account for the fact that the apostles failed to command a single individual to keep it? No dodging here. Proof! Proof! Proof! Why, the very preaching you mention here, and, in fact, more than ninety-nine per cent of all the preaching of the apostles recorded in the New Testament was done on the seventh-day Sabbath! This question ought to run like this: If Christians are not to keep the Sabbath day, how do you account for the fact that the apostles preached the gospel in Jerusalem without being accused by the Jews of being Sabbath-breakers? The silence of the Jews on this point is very convincing when we remember that after Jesus had healed the blind man on the Sabbath, the

Jews said, "This man is not of God, because He keeps not the Sabbath." The apostles were all Sabbath keepers, and suppositions to the contrary are surmises only.

Hard Nuts Cracked

14. Empty Nuts Already Cracked

Is it not a fact, according to the book of Acts, that the thing done was of more importance than the day? (Acts 20:7)

This question is certainly an illustration of the statement that language is sometimes used to conceal thought rather than to convey it. We suppose that this question was designed to have some relation to the question of Sabbath observance, but we are unable to see the least connection between it and the matter at issue. It is not worth while to waste time in cracking empty nuts.

15. Preservation of the Original Sabbath Day

Can you demonstrate that the day you keep is really the seventh day or Sabbath coming down in regular succession from the day on which God rested? If not, your day is no better than any other day. Admitting for argument's sake that the law of Moses is still in force, and that the fourth commandment is binding upon the whole human race, will you affirm that it is possible for all men to keep the same day? If so, how do you explain the fact that the traveler who starts out to go around the earth gains, say, if going west, one hour for every thousand miles traveled? How far would he go before he lost the count? Do you not see that he would be inevitably behind or in advance? Further, how do you explain the fact that far away toward the extremes of the earth, traveling from the equator, there are periods of six months night and six months day from age to age? Do you not see that it is a geographical impossibility for all men to keep the same day, and that the law was only intended for one people, one country, and one age?

The proof of an unbroken succession of Sabbath days is very simple. By a series of weekly miracles covering a period of forty years the particular day of the Sabbath was pointed out by God Himself. (Exodus 16) That this was the day set apart at creation is shown by the commandment as given at Sinai during the time of these miracles. (Exodus 20:8-11.) This very day was observed by the Jews during all their history until the first advent of our Lord, and He Himself, the Lord of the Sabbath, recognized the day which they kept as the true Sabbath. (Luke 4:16; 23:54, 56; 24:1.) Since the beginning of the Christian era all history testifies that there has been no break in the succession of weeks. We do affirm that it is possible for all men to keep the same day, but not the same time. The Sabbath travels around the earth, just as any other day does, and the inhabitants of the different portions of the earth who observe it, observe it as it comes to them. We do not recognize any "geographical impossibility" as an excuse for refusing to obey the law of God! Many of us have traveled around the world, going in a westerly direction all the time, and when we returned to our starting point, we found that we were observing the same day for the Sabbath as our seventh-day brethren who had remained at home all the time. Those who find difficulty concerning the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath on a round world are those who live in the same place and theorize about it. Those who travel meet with no such difficulty. When God created man, He said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28), and God's law was given to a people who were to fill the earth. What an absurdity it is to conjure up "a geographical impossibility" as an excuse for disobedience to the law of the God of the whole earth! Such an excuse will sound foolish to those who make it in the judgment.

16. How Do You Observe The Sabbath Day?

Do you keep the Sabbath day? No dodging, do you? Do you rest, or put in the day promulgating your doctrines? Do you not eat food on that day prepared by work on a fire kindled in violation of the law? (Exodus 20:8-11; 35:1-3.) Do you offer burnt offering required by the law? (Numbers 28:3-10.) Do you remain in your houses during the day? If you do not keep it according to the law, you do not keep it at all. If you admit that any part of the law concerning the Sabbath is done away, you are driven to the inevitable and irresistible conclusion that all is done away. If you deny that any part of it is done away, you condemn yourself; for you do not keep it. Which will you take?

Is it possible that you mean what you say, that no one can keep the laws of God while violating any of the laws of Moses? Why the burden of Christ's mission on earth, and that of the great apostle Paul, was to show

Hard Nuts Cracked

men how to do the very thing which you here declare an impossibility! "Which will you take?" We will not take either of your ways! We will neither attempt to keep them all, nor will we deny them all. Some were meant for the whole world-these were God's Ten Laws. Some were meant for but one people, one country, one age, these were the laws of Moses.

Which way will you take, then? We will take Christ's way. In spite of your erroneous assertion that these laws are inseparable, we will separate them, just as Christ showed they could be and were to be separated. Our choice lies, then, between the loyal acceptance of Christianity as taught and practiced by Christ and Paul on the one hand, or, on the other hand, the acceptance of a so-called Christianity which has been poisoned by the infusion of paganism.

The Christianity of Christ and Paul embodied the observance of the Sabbath of the Lord. The opposing religion asks that the Sunday of paganism, of Baal, of Constantine, be accepted as a substitute Sabbath in place of the Sabbath of Jehovah. Here are the two courses open to us and to you! Which way will you take? You have asked us not to dodge. We have not dodged a single issue. We have given you replies to every question you have asked, all of our answers being truth and nothing but the truth. We now in all sincerity ask you not to dodge-and we know what that means. It means that you will now recognize that the seventh-day Sabbath is the only true Sabbath since Christ abrogated the ceremonial Sabbaths. (Colossians 2:14-17) It means that instead of fighting the Sabbath, you will follow Christ in this and all other respects.

And so, having cracked these so-called "hard nuts" with the hammer of truth (Jeremiah 23:29) sufficiently to show that there is nothing in them, we respectfully hand back the empty shells, and remind you of the question of our Christ: "And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3:15.

Harvestime Books Resource Library
<http://www.remnant-prophecy.com>
<http://www.Harvestimebooks.com>
<http://www.bible-sabbath.com>