

I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." (Gal. 4: 10-11) "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath day; which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is Christ's." (Col. 2: 16-17.)

It will be granted, however, that whatever the Apostles' language in these passages may mean, it must be reconcilable with his practice and teaching elsewhere. Now there is nothing plainer in connection with this whole matter than that in some sense the Apostles did make some distinction of days. They did not consider every day alike. They considered that the first day of the week was the proper time for public worship, expected the churches to assemble on that day, and urged them to do so. On that day the Lord's supper was observed and on that day collections were made for the poor. In commemoration of the resurrection the day was kept as a religious festival and was known as the Lord's day. The language of Paul, therefore, could hardly have been meant to apply to this. But it might naturally enough be applied to the whole series of Jewish festivals, the significance of which had now passed away. The Jewish converts kept the first day of the week; but they were disposed to keep also the old festival as well, including the seventh-day Sabbath. Nor was there any objection to their doing so if they chose. But he would not have the Gentile converts brought under any such observance, as an obligation. To them, at least, all these festivals, which had no sacred associations connected with them, might be as other days. This was precisely the position he took with reference to all other Jewish institutions in that somewhat bitter struggle which he had to maintain against the Judaizing party that caused so much difficulty in the Apostolic Church and rendered necessary the calling of the Jerusalem Council.

But granting that this language was not intended to apply to the Lord's day, it may still be asked what authority we have for applying to it the restrictions of the Jewish Sabbath. Are we not to suppose that one of the reasons for changing the day of religious observance was to get rid of these very restrictions? Why thwart the design of Providence and bring us again into bondage? Is not freedom the very essence of New Testament religion?

Here we touch upon the very heart of the question, and everything depends upon a right answer being given. But there is perhaps no portion of the whole subject that has been so much befogged with misconceptions and false assumptions, both in the minds of assailants and defenders.

To begin with, it is wrongly assumed that the idea of the day being sacred for religious purposes is taken from the Mosaic law and is carried