

The Plight of the Pluck:
An Examination and Application of Mark 2.23-28

Ross Macdonald

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Many years ago I watched, with guarded frustration, the President of the United States aggressively engage against a proud and knowledgeable Christian woman on television. The President, on this occasion played by Martin Sheen on *The West Wing*, was preparing an 'ambush' on the Bible's explicit condemnation of homosexuality:

President Bartlett: (sarcastically sneering) "I like how you call homosexuality an abomination."

Ms. Jacobs: "I don't say homosexuality is an abomination, Mr. President, the Bible does."

President Bartlett: "Yes, it does. Leviticus."

Ms. Jacobs: "18.22."

President Bartlett: "Chapter and verse. I wanted to ask you a couple of questions while I had you are here. I am interested in selling my youngest daughter into slavery as sanctioned in Exodus 21.7. She's a Georgetown sophomore, speaks fluent Italian, always cleared the table when it was her turn. What would a good price for her be? While thinking about that, can I ask another? My chief of staff, Leo McGarry, insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35.2 clearly says he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself or is it okay to call the police? Here's one that is really important because we've got a lot of sports fans in this town. Touching the skin of a dead pig makes one unclean, Leviticus 11.7. If they promise to wear gloves, can the Washington Redskins still play football? Can Notre Dame? Can West Point? Does the whole town really have to be together to stone my brother John for planting different crops side by side? Can I burn my mother in a small family gathering for wearing garments made from two different threads? Think about those questions would you?"¹

Of course, the "questions" from this NBC scriptwriter's day-dream *reductio ad absurdum* of Biblical law are meant to go unanswered, an effect that is captured by the silenced and sullen

¹ From the NBC drama series *The West Wing*, episode 25: "The Midterms," originally aired October 18, 2000.

Ms. Jacobs. I watched this scene unfold with all the guarded frustration a fourteen-year old could muster. I was bewildered by the scriptwriter’s assumption that Christians—for two millennia, no less—had neither known nor dealt with President Bartlett’s proof-texts; as though the Bible itself was not sufficiently nuanced enough to distinguish eating oysters from bestiality!

Such assumptions reflect popular thought today, not only of the opponents of God’s revelation but, sadly, of poorly-informed Christians as well. As the strong-armed ranks of the so-called ‘New Tolerance’² wax rabid, churches increasingly retreat to Jesus through a Dispensational disavowal of Biblical law. Despite millennia of historical evidence to the contrary, Biblical holiness—in its Old Testament tense—is derisible enough in the world’s eyes to warrant executing Leo McGarry when consistently applied. We are watching “the Bible’s ‘strange’ preoccupation with ideas like holiness and purity receding into the distance.”³ It must be said that the Church is far more complicit in this wide-scale recession than any secular media outlet, as despicable as the propaganda may be. In pulling the basket-weave over the *light* of the Word, the Church has largely accommodated this cultural predilection to dismiss Biblical constraints of holiness. Markus Bockmuehl distills such an ethos: “A culture of holiness and purity that worried about menstrual uncleanness and mixed fibers in clothing can have nothing more to say to us about practical Christian ethics.”⁴

The Sabbath, as President Bartlett alluded to it in his rant, stands alongside such seemingly strange taboos. If I have little regard for my polyester-blend shirt, is it not the height of hypocrisy to have high regard for a particular day of the week? Ignorance, after all, is bliss; and there is a certain peace in assuming the application of the Sabbath to Christians went the way of Herod’s Temple. But, as Bockmuehl continues:

“...our peace may be disturbed when we return to the text and read words like these: “Remember the Sabbath day, *to keep it holy* . . . the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and *made it holy*” . . . “Holiness”? “Purity”? Here are these dreaded

² See D. A. Carson, *The Intolerance of Tolerance* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013).

³ Markus Bockmuehl, “Keeping It Holy”: Old Testament Commandment and New Testament Faith” in Carl E. Brazen & Christopher R. Seitz (eds.), *I Am the Lord Your God: Christian Reflections on the Ten Commandments* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 96.

⁴ Markus Bockmuehl, *ibid.*, 96.

words of ancient ritual and myth right in the middle of the Ten Commandments! Surely there must be a mistake in this awkward intrusion of ceremonial law into what was supposed to be the pure milk of universal reason and morality...”⁵

This sardonic characterization is less amusing when we consider the sheer scale of Christians who pay lip service to the Decalogue but functionally follow an ‘Ennialogue,’ finding no place for the ‘appointment’⁶ of the Sabbath in our post-Easter epoch. The heritage of Protestantism, in this regard, has largely eroded over the past generation; instead we find ourselves far beneath the observance that once caused Philip Schaff, the eminent historian of the Church, to praise

“...the churches of England, Scotland, and America, [who] to their incalculable advantage, excel the churches of the European continent... [their observance] is a wholesome school of discipline, a means of grace for the people, a safeguard of public morality and religion, a bulwark against infidelity, and a source of immeasurable blessing to the church, the state, and the family. Next to the Church and the Bible, the Lord’s Day is the chief pillar of Christian society.”⁷

It is to this very matter that we now turn; moving out of the Oval Office and into the grain fields of Galilee, where we find Jesus engaging the proud and knowledgeable Pharisees on their doctrine of the Sabbath (Mark 2.23-28):

“Now it happened that He went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” But He said

⁵ Markus Bockmuehl, *ibid.*, 97.

⁶ See *The Savoy Declaration* (1658); 22.7; so also *The Second London Baptist Confession* (1689); 22.7.

⁷ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume I: Apostolic Christianity A. D. 1-100* (Third Edition; Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 1:479-80. Thomas Shepard cuts to the heart of this wider application of the Fourth Commandment in asking: “...being thus commanded as such a law, whether it be not therefore of perpetual and universal obligation, binding all nations and persons in all ages, in their hearts, lives, manners, to the observance thereof, as a part of that holiness we owe to God, and which God requires of men according to rules of moral equity; or, on the contrary, whether it be not rather a typical, ceremonial, figurative, and temporary precept, binding only some persons, or that one nation of the Jews for some time, from the obedience of which law Christians (in respect of any law of God) are now exempted” *Thesis Sabbaticae* (Volume 3 of the Works of Thomas Shepard; Ligonier: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992), 55.

to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?” And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”⁸

Our examination of this passage will begin with (1) the background of Sabbath observance relevant to Mark 2.23ff; then we will consider (2) the structure and literary context of the passage before (3) examining each verse in modest detail; and finally, from there we will close with (4) brief thoughts arising from Mark 2.23-28.

1.) The Background of Sabbath Observance in Mark 2.23-28

The Sabbath was instituted by God as “a day of rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord” (Exod. 16.23), with its analogy bound to God’s pattern of rest after the week of Creation (Exod. 20.8-11; cf. Gen. 2.2-3). Though the Sabbath is rightly considered to be a ‘creational ordinance,’ it is further developed with Israel as “a sign” of their covenantal relationship to the redeeming God who makes them holy (Exod. 31.13; cf. Ezek. 20.12; Neh. 9.14). This redemption is expressly shown forth in God delivering Israel out of Egypt (Deut. 5.15). The elevation of this ‘creation / redemption’ pattern explains why the Sabbath was meant to be a “delight” to Israel (Isaiah 58.13)⁹, and also why God’s prosecution of this ‘stiff-necked’ People was never far from the topic of the Sabbath (Neh. 13.17; Ezek. 20.13, 24; Jer. 17.27; cf. Amos 8.5; Hos. 2.11).

The nature of the Sabbath being a ‘covenant sign’ of Israel’s relationship with God took on greater significance in her post-Exilic existence among the nations, as “the covenant people depended on observance of the law that distinguished them from Gentiles”¹⁰ (cf. Isa. 56.2-6;

⁸ NKJV translation (par. Matt. 12.1-8; Luke 6.1-5)

⁹ P. W. Smuts, *Mark by the Book: A New Multi-Directional Method for Understanding the Synoptic Gospels* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2013), 39.

¹⁰ M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (New Testament Library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 89.

58.13; 66.23). This side of the ‘ways that parted,’ it is hard to imagine how the Sabbath embodied a virulent nationalism in the days Jesus and the early Church, functioning as “a mark of Israel’s very identity,”¹¹ and accordingly “was promoted and defended with more than merely pietistic zeal... It was a matter of national pride.”¹²

Thus the observance of the Sabbath began to snowball in traditions and regulations in the hands of pious Pharisees, an inference we’ll take for granted. Even a cursory glance at Jesus’ interaction with Pharisaical hermeneutics reveals as much.¹³ As the guiding voices of the post-Exilic prophets waned, the proper observance of the Sabbath “developed into a luxuriant growth of halakhic case law, ultimately codified in the Mishnah.”¹⁴ Exodus 20.8-11 and Deuteronomy 5.12-16 are clear enough in forbidding work on the Sabbath, but the interpretations later gathered into the Mishnah name thirty-nine classes of work that are held to violate the holy day (*M.Sabb.* 7.2). In fact, the scribes seem to be aware of the tedious nature of such boundaries, as one tractate records: “The rules for the Sabbath are like mountains hanging by a hair, for Scripture is scanty and the rules many.”¹⁵ More pertinent for Mark 2.23ff are the regulations concerning reaping, which is included as one of the Mishnah’s thirty-nine main classes of work.¹⁶ Beyond castigations of the Pharisees’ fixation on externality, such codifications evince how sincerely they understood the Sabbath to be a *holy* day; one which therefore had to be guarded. This would

¹¹M. Eugene Boring, *ibid.*, 89. Markus Bockmuehl adds: “...respected Christian interpreters have admittedly [pressed super-sessionist readings] from time to time, thereby directly or (more often) indirectly fueling the assumption that Old Testament concerns about holiness are entirely passé. In this vein, Christians have often argued that in the New Testament these notions are swept aside as obsolete relics of an ethnic particularism” (*ibid.*, 107).

¹²R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 142.

¹³Schaff snarls: “...in the hands of the Pharisees it became a legal bondage rather than a privilege and benediction. Christ as the Lord of the Sabbath opposed this mechanical ceremonialism and restored the true spirit and benevolent aim of the institution” *History of the Christian Church*, 1:477.

¹⁴R. T. France, *ibid.*, 143. He continues: “...while the detailed codification belongs to the end of the second century, there is no reason to doubt that its material represents in principle the interpretations of sabbath law already accepted (at least by the Pharisees) in the early first century” (*ibid.*).

¹⁵*M.Hag.* 1.8, quoted in Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 451.

¹⁶See Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 201 n. 122. Though as we’ll see, the specific verbs used in Mark 2.23f appear to exonerate Jesus’ disciples from “reaping,” even according to the strict standards of Jewish halakhah.

explain the fortification of the ‘hedges’ around the law in a Jew/Gentile environment. Jesus does not dismantle such hedges because He is *less* concerned with holiness or purity; but on the contrary, He is concerned with the manifest truncation and corruption of *true* holiness. So Bockmuehl again:

“...the polarity of sacred and profane remains foundational, and linked in significant ways to a moral framework of purity. At one level this might seem to be nothing other than what one would expect, if the Old Testament were taken seriously as Christian Scripture. But in the current gnosticizing hermeneutical climate it certainly is a point well worth reiterating. There is no such thing as “the Old Testament God” who is somehow in a different category from the New Testament version... Aside from participating in the great festivals, Jesus shows by the very shape of his debate with the Pharisees (e.g. Mark 3.4 par) that he affirmed the sanctity of the Sabbath¹⁷ ... The Sabbath as such is a given, and what is at stake is *not the holiness of the Sabbath* but how it should be understood.”¹⁸

2.) The Structure and Literary Context of Mark 2.23-28

Mark 2.23-28 belongs to a series of five ‘conflicts’¹⁹ that run from 2.1-3.6; namely, the healing of the paralytic (2.1-12), the eating with tax-collectors and sinners (2.13-17), the question about fasting (2.18-22), plucking grain on the Sabbath (2.23-28), and the healing of the man with the withered hand (3.1-6). These five conflicts set the stage for Mark’s plot of Jesus’ provocation and engagement with Israel’s leaders, which turns on the Pharisaical notions of holiness and purity referenced above. In Mark’s narrative, “Jesus transgresses the boundaries of

¹⁷ He adds “...apart from a famously enigmatic and perhaps ironic aside in John (5.16-18), no Gospel text accepts that Jesus willfully or even inadvertently breaks the Sabbath... on several occasions in the Synoptics he cites established views about the Sabbath that appear to meet with the tacit agreement of his... opponents” (ibid., 116).

¹⁸ Markus Bockmuehl, *ibid.*, 113-116 (emphasis mine).

¹⁹ For Mark’s development of plot through ‘conflict’ see David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Third Edition; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 77-97. For the ‘deviant’ dynamic of Jesus’ relationship to his companions, see Vernon K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 109f.

purity... God enters the arena of impurity without regard to the risk of defilement and, by an act of reversal, brings purity to those who are unclean.”²⁰ This creates tensions with

“the leaders of the nation [who upheld] the boundaries of ritual purity... They accuse Jesus of blasphemy for claiming the right to pardon sins (2.1-12). They challenge his eating with tax collectors and sinners (2.15-17). They challenge the disciples’ plucking of grain on the Sabbath (2.23-28). They seek charges against Jesus for healing on the Sabbath and they plot to destroy him (3.1-6).”²¹

The conflicts in this series “have been constructed in such a way as to form a single literary unit with a tight... chiasmic structure: A, B, C, B’, A’ (where A = Mark 2.1-12; B = 2.13-17; C = 2.18-22; B’ = 2.23-8; A’ = 3.1-6).”²² We will reference some of these parallels in the verse-by-verse analysis below. Enlarging the scope of Mark’s account, we find that “many of the healing miracles in the Gospels are connected to the Sabbath and thereby result in Sabbath controversy.”²³ Interestingly, Mark 2.23-28 is the only Sabbath controversy that is recorded apart from a miracle, but its close relationship to 3.1-6 tends to coalesce the issue of the Sabbath.

In terms of transmission, if one assumes Markan priority (as most commentators do today) we can note that Matthew 12.1-8 follows Mark 2.23-28 almost verbatim. The ‘almost’ is retained, first, by the fact that only Matthew records the disciples being hungry (12.1).²⁴ Matthew may have felt this detail was better expressed than assumed, perhaps more closely drawing the reference to David’s hunger in Jesus’ reference to 1 Samuel 21.1-7. Second, Matthew’s provides Jesus’ retort from Hosea 6.6: “If you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not

²⁰ David Rhoads in Janice Capel Anderson & Stephen D. Moore (eds.), *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Second Edition; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 164.

²¹ Rhoads, Anderson & Moore, *ibid.*, 164-5.

²² Joanna Dewey, “The Literary Structure of the Controversy Stories in Mark 2:1-3:6” in William R. Telford (ed.), *The Interpretation of Mark* (Studies in New Testament Interpretation; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 141.

²³ Michael H. Burer, *Divine Sabbath Work* (BBR Supp. 5; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 14. “This includes the healing of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3.1-6, Matt. 12.9-14, Luke 6.6-11), the healing of the bent-over woman (Luke 13.10-17), the healing of the man with dropsy (Luke 14.1-6), the healing of the paralytic by the pool of Bethzatha (John 5), and the healing of the man born blind (John 9)” (*ibid.*).

²⁴ P. W. Smuts, *ibid.*, 35.

sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless"²⁵ (12.7), a quotation that "points us back to Matthew 9.10-13 (Jesus' eating with tax collectors and sinners), a story also told by Mark (2.15-17)."²⁶ Third, and most significantly, Matthew leaves aside the pronouncement of Mark 2.27: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." As we will see, this is a paradigmatic statement for Mark 2.23-28 and its presentation of the Sabbath; Matthew's redaction of v. 27 (assuming it was available to him) is beyond our purposes. Given the preponderance of Sabbath episodes mentioned in the Gospels, it is clear that such controversies "were very much at home in an early Jewish context ... [still] the key Synoptic evidence does not have Jesus contradicting any biblical Sabbath law."²⁷ We turn now to consider our passage more closely.

3.) Plucking the Grain: A Verse-by-Verse Examination of Mark 2.23-28

Mark 2.23: "Now it happened that He went through the grain fields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain..."

The first thing to notice is the lack of time and location. The former we can safely infer from the charge of the Pharisees: this was the Sabbath. But where these grain fields were, and why Jesus and His disciples were traveling through them is a matter of conjecture. Cranfield explains the lack of location is due to the form being "a pronouncement-story", an isolated narrative without details of time or place.²⁸ K. L. Schmidt called Mark's account "a capital

²⁵ John Calvin said of this retort: "Christ reproves the Pharisees indirectly for not understanding the proper use of ceremonies. He charges them with Israel's age-old sin: rigorous observance of the minutest ceremonial detail, but without regard for the weightier matters of mercy and kindness. Throughout the entire Old Testament, God is unmistakably clear: he prefers mercy to sacrifice; whoever is occupied entirely with the latter and ignores the former, distorts the whole law." cited in Richard B. Gaffin, *Calvin and the Sabbath: The Controversy of Applying the Fourth Commandment* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 1998), 95.

²⁶ Mark Love, "'But I Say to You...': Scripture and Mercy in Matthew" *Leaven* 16.4 (2008), 174.

²⁷ James Crossley in Michael F. Bird & James G. Crossley, *How Did Christianity Begin?: A Believer and Non-Believer Examine the Evidence* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 7-8.

²⁸ C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* (CGTC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959 repr. 2000), 114. He adds: "[It] would be of special interest in the early Church as it had to face the issue of its relation to the Sabbath" (ibid).

example of a particular story that is not tied down to a specific time and place.”²⁹ The question of “where,” (as it is not given) must have been of little concern to Mark, and therefore is of little concern to us. However, the question of “why” is more intriguing.

Perhaps drawing on the reference Jesus will make to David’s ‘mission’ in 1 Samuel 21.2 (“The King has ordered me on some business”), some have argued that they were journeying “from one place to another on the missionary work of the Kingdom... [and] began to stave off hunger.”³⁰ This certainly would fit the Old Testament allusion like a glove. But if they were traveling, why would they go through grain fields and not take the major roads? In any case, one must explain the presence of the Pharisees, and why they are offended by the manner of the disciples’ “drive-thru” snacking. Furthermore, if this is so, Carson asks: “...why are the disciples and Jesus not accused of breaking the restrictions concerning a Sabbath day’s journey?”³¹ Here the suggestion of Samuele Bacchiocchi, though only a suggestion, seems plausible:

“...the presence of the Pharisees among them on a Sabbath day suggests the possibility that Christ and the disciples had attended the service at the synagogue and, having received no dinner invitation, they were making their way through the fields to find a place to rest. If this were the case, then Christ’s reply to the Pharisees, particularly the quotation, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” (Matt. 12.7), could well contain a veiled rebuke to their negligence to practice Sabbath hospitality.”³²

The disciples begin to pluck the heads of grain³³, which leads to the concern of the Pharisees in 2.24: “And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

²⁹ cited in D. A. Carson (ed.), *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 60.

³⁰ D. A. Carson (ed.), *ibid.*, 61.

³¹ D. A. Carson (ed.), *ibid.*, 61.

³² Samuele Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: The Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977), 50.

³³ “Presumably Mark means that, as the law allowed, they were plucking ears as they went, but he has expressed it awkwardly” R. T. France, *ibid.*, 144. He adds: “It is sometimes suggested that ὀδὸν ποιεῖν is a Latinism, from *iter facere*; but this does not explain the odd reversal of the infinitive and participle” (*ibid.*, n. 49).

Strikingly, as Francis Moloney notes, this is the first time the Pharisees *themselves* have spoken to Jesus. “The stage is now set for the direct involvement of the Pharisees, leading to their decision [to seek to kill Him], taken with the Herodians in 3.6.”³⁴ As mentioned above, we see how the conflict between Jesus and the leaders has erupted over Sabbath observance. The words οὐκ ἔξεστιν (‘that which is not lawful’) are “perhaps intended as a warning (cf. John 5.10),”³⁵ it certainly would have carried that weight from positions of authority.³⁶ The phrase οὐκ ἔξεστιν is used six times in Mark (2.24, 26; 3.4; 6.18; 10.2; 12.14). It does not “merely express the pickiness of those sensitive to the niceties of tradition, but belongs to the juristic terminology of scribal discussion and is used, e.g., by John the Baptist in his charge against Herod (6.18).”³⁷

That ‘which is not lawful’ of course refers to the Sabbath law. Whoever the fields belonged to, gleaning the edges was allowed³⁸ (Deut. 23.25), though debatable in terms of the Sabbath regulations.³⁹ The Pharisees certainly know what side of the debate they come down on; they define the “plucking” of the disciples as “reaping,”⁴⁰ even if Mark presents the disciples as simply making their way through a field of grain. “The Pharisees... are portrayed as excessively

³⁴ Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 68. He adds: “Previously Jesus’ opponents have been the scribes (2.6), the scribes of the Pharisees (v. 16), an unnamed group pointing to the fasting of the disciples of the Baptist, and the disciples of the Pharisees (v. 18)” (ibid).

³⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 115.

³⁶ “The casuistry of the rabbinical interpreter found here its most fruitful field in drawing the line between work and not-work, and managed to get in its most ingenious and absurd refinements. But the great difficulty, as with all their work, is that they managed so to miss the very spirit and object of the law, that they made its observance largely a burden, instead of a privilege. Whenever they speak of that which is lawful, or unlawful, their standard is not simply the written law, but this traditional interpretation of it” Ezra P. Gould, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1896 repr. 1983), 48.

³⁷ M. Eugene Boring, *ibid.*, 88.

³⁸ “A Jew was allowed to pluck corn that did not belong to him, so long as he used only his hands (Deut. 23.25)” so C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 114.

³⁹ “Philo states that the Sabbath holiday “extends also to trees and plants; for it is not permitted to cut any shoot or branch, or even a leaf, or to pluck any fruit whatsoever” (*Vit. Moses* 2.4). But the verbs that Philo uses ... suggest intentional agricultural or horticultural work.” Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 202 n. 123.

⁴⁰ “...when plucking is prohibited on the Sabbath, the context implies that it is the pulling off and collecting of produce for consumption that is forbidden (*M.Sabb.* 7.2). This is not what the disciples of Jesus were doing” Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 202 n. 123; contra William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), 115 n. 80.

strict in their observance and as attempting to impose their views on others.”⁴¹ It is important to underscore that Jesus was not playing fast and loose with the Torah, regardless of the Pharisees charge⁴² against the disciples ‘work.’ We cannot fail to distinguish between the supposed stipulations of Sabbath observance according to the Pharisees and the actual stipulations of Sabbath observance according to Jesus. In this account, as Carson comments, “neither Jesus nor His disciples appear to be guilty of transgressing any injunction of Torah, despite the implicit rejection of the halakhah.”⁴³

Jesus responds to the charge against His disciples in Mark 2.25-26: “But He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?”⁴⁴

Instead of arguing that the disciples were not actually reaping, Jesus takes the occasion to press the Pharisees ‘regulative principle.’ He alludes to the precedent of David in 1 Samuel 21.1-6 as an analogy.⁴⁵ There David comes to Nob, and seeks bread from Ahimelech⁴⁶ the priest:

⁴¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 202.

⁴² Speaking of the thirty-nine classes of forbidden work upon the Sabbath, “according to *M.Sabb.* 7.2 “of these the third is reaping. [Also] according to *M.Sanh.* 7.4 violation of the Sabbath was punishable by stoning; but 7.8 distinguishes different degrees of guilt, and stoning is prescribed only if the offender has been previously warned.” C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 115.

⁴³ D. A. Carson (ed.), *ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁴ “For the use of a counter-question including an appeal to Scripture (characteristic of Rabbinic arguments) cf. 12.10, 26” C. E. B. Cranfield, 115.

⁴⁵ Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 202.

⁴⁶ “Mark may have chosen Abiathar (‘Father God gives abundantly’) because the name would point to God’s provision for people’s needs” Dale Miller & Patricia Miller, *The Gospel of Mark as Midrash on Earlier Jewish and New Testament Literature* (Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 21; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 107. R. T. France argues, on the other hand, that (*epi*) plus a genitive can mean ‘the lifetime of’ Abiathar, pointing to Luke 3.2, Acts 11.28 (See *ibid.*, 146 n. 52). Jim Hamilton writes: “Perhaps there are typological forces at work here, too. David did interact with Ahimelech in 1 Samuel 21.1-9, but Abiathar is the priest who escapes from Doeg’s slaughter (22.20) ... the reference to Abiathar in Mark might be that just as Saul and Doeg opposed David and Abiathar’s household, so also the Pharisees are opposing Jesus and his followers” Jim Hamilton, “The Typology of David’s Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 16.2 (2012), 13. Similarly, cf. Rikk E. Watts, “Mark,” in G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson (eds.) *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 141.

“So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the Lord” (1 Sam. 21.6). Getting back to our chiastic structure, we see the thematic repetition of eating:

“The content of B (eating with sinners) and B’ (plucking grain in the Sabbath) is different, but the structure or form is the same. In both cases the final proverb and saying justify the initial action. The central sections of B and B’ however, are concerned *not* with sinners or Sabbath, but both are concerned with *eating*. In B, Jesus enters a house (as story A took place in a house) and eats with tax-collectors and sinners (2.15-16). The verb ἐσθίω is used twice in the present tense. In B’ Jesus refers to the scriptural incident of David entering the house of God⁴⁷ (as A’ takes place in a synagogue), eating the bread of his presence and giving it also to “those with him” (2:25-6). ἐσθίω is used twice in the aorist. In story B, Jesus and his disciples eat with tax-collectors, something not lawful in light of the rabbinic laws of ritual cleanliness. In B’ David and his followers ate that which was lawful *only* for priests to eat (Mark 2.26)”⁴⁸

The regulations about the showbread are given in Leviticus 24.5-9 (cf. Exodus 25.23-30).⁴⁹ This focus on eating is the structural link for both Mark’s parallel conflict story as well as Jesus’ reference to David’s consumption of the showbread, alternatively called ‘the bread of the Presence.’⁵⁰ David enters the ‘house of God’ and eats the bread, a detail that must have stuck out to Jesus’ contemporaries, when only priests were allowed to enter the temple building

⁴⁷ “The name by which the tent or shrine where the Ark was kept in Shiloh is referred to, for instance in Judges 18.31. Cf. ‘the house of the Lord’ e.g. Judges 19.18 ... David comes to Ahimelech the priest at Nob, but there is no reference in the passage to any house of God” C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁸ Joanna Dewey, “The Literary Structure,” 143-4 (emphasis original). “This pericope is joined to the preceding one by the theme of eating (and) not eating and to the following one by the issue of what constitutes authentic Sabbath observance. In Mark’s situation his predominantly Gentile church did not adhere strictly to the Sabbath, and was beginning to or had already replaced the Jewish seventh day with the Christian first day of the week, the “Lord’s Day” M. Eugene Boring, *ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 116. On the showbread’s relationship to the Lord’s Supper in early Christianity, see Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 89-94.

⁵⁰ “The Hebrew name ... seems to mean that the bread, in some way, symbolized God’s presence” Ezra P. Gould, *ibid.*, 49.

proper, and “the bread of the Presence, because of its placement on a golden table near the Holy of Holies, was holier than ordinary sacrifices.”⁵¹

As we’ll see in Mark 2.27 below, many interpreters see nothing more in this reference to David than Jesus giving a justification for hungry disciples to eat as necessary. So Ezra Gould: “In this case, there was no other bread, and when David and his hungry men appeared, it became a case of physical need against ritual law.”⁵² Or again: “In the case of David and his men, Scripture itself shows that, under exceptional circumstances, human need might rightly be regarded as taking precedence over the law.”⁵³ Is this Davidic reference as straightforward as that?⁵⁴ Some are not willing to see any Messianic foreshadowing in Jesus’ reference to David (perhaps even despite the ‘typological underpinnings’ explored by James Hamilton; see n. 46 and n. 54), and offer little by way of explanation: “It is sometimes maintained that this appeal to David’s example was a veiled messianic claim; but... it seems unlikely that Jesus cited the case of David for this reason...”⁵⁵ Or again: “Jesus replied to the allegation by referring to David and the consecrated bread... This is not to be construed as a messianic allusion.”⁵⁶ Even worse yet: “Mark’s point is that it is essential that Jesus and his followers be supported in their mission...”

⁵¹ Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 203 citing Paul V. M. Flesher, “The Bread of the Presence,” *ABD* 1:780-1.

⁵² Ezra P. Gould, *ibid.*, 49-50.

⁵³ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 76.

⁵⁴ It would seem that Mark has a greater interest in the placement and function of David in this passage, as Jim Hamilton’s fascinating study of the typological structure in 1 Samuel demonstrates: “Like David, Jesus was anointed as Israel’s king in the presence of the prophet John according to the word of the Lord (John 1:30-34). Just as David ministered to Saul when he was troubled by the evil spirit, Jesus ministered to those troubled by evil spirits by casting them out (e.g., Mark 1:21-27). Just as Saul had more regard for setting a trap for David than for the good of his daughter, so the Pharisees had more regard for setting a trap for Jesus than for the welfare of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3:1-2)... [12] ...Jesus had success in the five controversies recounted in Mark 2:1-3:6. Just as David’s mounting triumphs resulted in Saul fearing and opposing him, so also Jesus’ triumphs resulted in the Pharisees and Herodians, the establishment, plotting his destruction (Mark 3:6). Just as David fled to the wilderness, so Mark’s five controversies are preceded by the note that “Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter” (Mark 1:45). Then after the five controversies culminate in the plot to kill Jesus (Mark 2:1-3:6)” (*ibid.*, 11-12).

⁵⁵ C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁶ D. A. Carson (ed.), *ibid.*, 61.

even if breaking the Sabbath law is necessary in order for them to be sustained.”⁵⁷ In contrast to these sweeping dismissals, Moloney makes the helpful point that the disciples are not driven by extreme hunger (certainly not in Mark), rather they break the Sabbath observance by plucking the grain, not by eating it. “The focus of the comparison, therefore, is not what one might or might not do on a Sabbath, on the basis of the actions of David and his companions, but upon the parallel drawn between David and Jesus. The issue is Christological.”⁵⁸ R. T. France rightfully pushes further:

“The question is not in any case whether the specific action could or could not be declared legitimate; it was rather, as vv. 27-28 will make clear, whether Jesus had the right to override agreed conventions, in his capacity as κύριός τοῦ σαββάτου. The focus of the scriptural allusion is not therefore so much on what David did, as on the fact that it was David who did it, and that Scripture records his act, illegal as it was, with apparent approval. The logic of Jesus’ argument therefore implies a covert claim to a personal authority at least as great as that of David.”⁵⁹

This leads us to the logion unique to Mark (2.27): “And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

As is often pointed out, the first part of the “antithetical saying” (v. 27) evokes the creation account of Gen. 1.1-2.4 with its verb ἐγένετο. God created human beings on the sixth day (1.26-31) and rested on the seventh day (2.1-3), so that the positive beginning of v. 27 (i.e. “the Sabbath was made for man...”) infers that God created the Sabbath for man, in order to benefit them. The negative ending of v. 27 (i.e. “...not man for the Sabbath”) likewise infers that

⁵⁷ Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 40.

⁵⁸ Francis J. Moloney, *ibid.*, 69. While the issue *is* Christological, one may differ on the implication of it, e.g. “For Mark, the question of the validity of the ritual law, over which there was such a fierce struggle at the time of Paul, is in principle no longer a problem and has clearly been resolved in favor of the mission to the Gentiles. The work is in fact obviously written for Gentile Christians ... Mark 2.23-28 and 3.1-6 show freedom towards the Sabbath commandment based on Christology...” Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 13.

⁵⁹ R. T. France, *ibid.*, 145. For a critique of the ‘qal vahomer’ argument, see D. M. Cohn-Sherbok, “An Analysis of Jesus' Arguments Concerning the Plucking of Grain on the Sabbath” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 1.2 (1979) cf. also Joseph A. Pipa, *The Lord's Day* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 1997), 76. M. Eugene Boring argues against the ‘qal vahomer’ interpretation because “the focus is entirely on Jesus’ authority” (*ibid.*, 91).

the observance of the Sabbath should not be harmful.⁶⁰ Jesus means *at least* this much in v. 27, though the Pharisees likely would agree with such a principle anyway; Cranfield points to it in a later rabbinical observation: “The Sabbath is delivered unto you, and you are not delivered to the Sabbath’ (*Mekilta* 109b on Exod. 31.14),⁶¹ but qualifies the extreme necessity required by the situation. What Jesus is saying in v. 27, according to Cranfield, “has a much more general application, for there is no indication that the disciples were in danger of dying of starvation.”⁶² Donald Guthrie seems to agree with the general application of Jesus’ statement, taking it as His “ruling principle... that the Sabbath was made for man (Mark 2.27), not vice-versa, which meant that it was designed to be a benefit and not a burden.”⁶³

While there is certainly a clear ‘creational’ dynamic at play in 2.27, Jesus does not let the controversial behavior of His disciples prevent an opportunity to press the unique nature of His authority. Indeed, this pericope begins to crescendo in 2.28: “Therefore the Son of Man⁶⁴ is also Lord of the Sabbath.”

It was an older suggestion of T. W. Manson that Mark’s use of ‘son of man’ in 2.28 relied upon an Aramaism that would connote corporate humanity. In this sense, 2.28 is mirroring the statement of Jesus in 2.27, namely, that “man” is the ‘Lord’ of the Sabbath. In the decades since this view gained traction, it has been squarely dismissed. The problem arises here as earlier, where conceding Manson’s point requires reading 2.10 as though generic “man” has the authority to forgive sins (!), a rendering which hardly belongs to Jesus’ divine provocations that Mark develops from 2.1-3.6. R. T. France would rightly remind us that Mark’s “readers lived in a Christian context where ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ... could have only one meaning, and that was as a title of Jesus ... it is inconceivable that Mark could have intended, or expected his readers to

⁶⁰ Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 203.

⁶¹ citing the opinion of Rabbi Simeon b. Menasya (c. A.D. 180) “which is perhaps to be traced back to Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees (see 1 Macc. 2.39-41)” C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 117.

⁶² C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 117.

⁶³ Donald Guthrie, “The New Testament Approach to Social Responsibility,” *Vox Evangelica* 8 (1973), 50.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of Mark’s use of ‘Son of Man’ see Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark’s Gospel: An Early Christians Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda* (WUNT 2. Reihe 245; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 102-7.

understand, a different sense for the phrase in this case.”⁶⁵ Eugene Boring gives the lively insight that Mark uses the ‘son of man’ terminology in the plural when speaking generally (only in 3.28), whereas every other instance refers to the unique identity of Jesus. Referencing the suggestion of Manson we’ve described above, he adds:

“This connection between the “man” of v. 27 and “Son of Man” of v. 28 has sometimes been understood to mean that “man,” that is, human beings as such, are Lord of the Sabbath, as though the dominion over the world given by God at creation *also* includes freedom to dispose of Sabbath rules as each human being sees fit. This is a too post-Enlightenment, humanist reading of Mark.”⁶⁶

Indeed, Jesus’ self-designation of the ‘Son of Man’ leads the reader of Mark’s Gospel toward the second major section of the narrative (8.31-15.47). Only then “will the reader recognize not only *that* Jesus has authority to forgive sins and is Lord of the Sabbath, but also *how* He arrives at such authority as the vindicated Son of Man (cf. 14.62).”⁶⁷ In terms of the Son of Man being κύριος of the Sabbath, this is the first instance of “Lord” (except representing the divine Name when quoted from the LXX in 1.3).⁶⁸ Mark will further develop the identification of Jesus as κύριος, especially in 12.35-37, where Jesus identifies the messianic “Son” of David as the “*Lord* of David” by appealing to Psalm 110.1 (cf. 10.47-48).⁶⁹ Any attempt to ignore this early staging of messianic fulfillment presented by the David / Christ typology in 2.24-26 is likewise hindered by the messianic fulfillment presented by the ‘Son of Man’ statement in 2.28. Although the phrase does not explicitly allude to Daniel 7.13, Mark 2.28 (as well as 2.10) begins to frame the messianic expectations surrounding Daniel’s vision around Jesus. So Collins:

⁶⁵ R. T. France, *ibid.*, 147. “The insight to which the comment gives expression would of course have been of the greatest importance to the early Church (see Rom. 14.5f, Gal. 4.10, Col. 2.16)” C. E. B. Cranfield, *ibid.*, 118.

⁶⁶ M. Eugene Boring, *ibid.*, 91 (emphasis original).

⁶⁷ Francis J. Moloney, *ibid.*, 70 (emphasis original). “The setting of the incident in Mark and Luke (6.1ff) is identical ... but Luke has no parallel to Mark 2.27; the passage leaps from the David incident to the affirmation of the lordship of the Son of Man over the Sabbath, so that the pronouncement of the authority of Jesus stands out even more” D. A. Carson (ed.), *ibid.*, 66.

⁶⁸ R. T. France, *ibid.*, 148.

⁶⁹ see Hans F. Bayer, *A Theology of Mark: The Dynamic between Christology and Authentic Discipleship* (Explorations in Biblical Theology; Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2012), 55.

“...the informed member of the audience knows that Jesus is the one ‘like a son of man’ alluded to in Daniel 7, that He is the messianic Son of Man in an understanding of Daniel 7.13 characteristic of the followers of Jesus... the allusion to Jesus’ status as the Messiah in vv. 27-28 puts the appeal to David in a new light. The incident is not longer seen primarily as an argument about human hunger and need in general, but about David as king and his authority.”⁷⁰

The straining regulations of the Pharisees may have given Jesus the occasion to distinguish proper observance of the Sabbath from its halakhic counterpart; but the thrust of 2.23-28 (as with each of the ‘conflict’ stories) centers on Jesus Himself. Here, specifically, Mark allows the Davidic typology to emerge; “After all, the attitude of the Pharisees shows that [Jesus], too, is a fugitive king, to whom the religious leaders stand opposed.”⁷¹ The important and often neglected point, in all of this, is that Jesus never abrogates the Sabbath as such (cf. 1.40-45).⁷² The Sabbath is not the central focus of the pericope, but Jesus nevertheless affirms it as the gift of God to humanity (v. 27), and reveals its subjection to His authority as the Son of Man (v. 28).

4.) Concluding Thoughts

What can the bold (dare we say ‘plucky’) claim of Mark 2.28 entail but Christ’s continual exercise of Lordship over the Sabbath? “As long as mankind exists, and Christ rules as Son of

⁷⁰ Adela Yarbro Collins, *ibid.*, 204-5. “If the ruling of *m.Sanh.* 2.4 was known already in the first century CE, it would explain the relationship between Jesus’ reference to David and the activity of the disciples: “[The king] may break through [the private domain of any man] to make himself a road and none may protest against him: the king’s road has no prescribed measure.” (*ibid.*, 205 citing trans. from Danby, *Mishnah*, 384).

⁷¹ Iain D. Campbell, *On the First Day of the Week: God, the Christian and the Sabbath* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2005), 116.

⁷² “Did Christ (and/or Matthew) equate the Temple with the Sabbath, viewing both as doomed and superseded by His Messianic coming? While this is true of the Temple, whose destruction Christ foretells (Matt. 24.2) and whose curtain “was torn in two” (Matt. 27.51) to signify that type had met the antitype in Christ’s sacrifice, this can hardly be said of the Sabbath. In fact, according to the Gospels, Christ proclaims Himself Lord of the Sabbath, declares that the day was made for man (Mark 2.27-28), reveals its redemptive function (Luke 4.14-18; 13.12, 15, 16; Matt. 12.12; John 5.17) and alludes to its future observance (Matt. 24.20)” Samuele Bacchiocchi, *ibid.*, 53 n. 97. cf. Erik Kun-Chun Wong, “The Matthaean Understanding of the Sabbath: A Response to G.N. Stanton” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 14.44 (1991).

Man, the Sabbath principle remains under Christ's direction and for the good of all men... The claim is staggering. If Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath, he is God!"⁷³ There yet remains a rest. Indeed, the thinking that suggests that the Sabbath has been utterly abrogated must avoid the claim Christ places upon it; "If He is Lord of the Sabbath, then the Sabbath remains."⁷⁴ As another writer put it: "A dispensational treatment of the Sabbath... simply cannot stand in the presence of Jesus' teaching ... Mark 2.27-28 ... forcefully contradicts those who, with preconceived bias, expect to find the Sabbath rescinded in the New Testament era."⁷⁵

In answering the call of President Bartlett—to 'think about these questions' of the validity and application of Biblical law—it is necessary to make distinctions; whether in terms of redemptive-historical revelation, or in accordance with the so-called 'threefold division' (if there is much difference therein).⁷⁶ It is the rejection of this latter approach that, as Philip Ross asserts, has often gone hand-in-hand with anti-Sabbatarianism. The polarizing attitudes toward the validity of the Sabbath command for Christians "are largely shaped by conclusions or expectations arising out of Jesus' attitude to the law."⁷⁷

Some, like A. T. Lincoln,⁷⁸ maintain that Jesus' fulfillment of the concept of rest tied up with the Sabbath means that the Old Testament 'physical' Sabbath rest has now become a 'salvation rest' in its wake. Ross rightly interrogates: "...in what way is this rest new for the

⁷³ Iain D. Campbell, *ibid.*, 119 (citing Duncan Macfarlan of Renfrew, *A Treatise on the Authority, Ends and Observance of the Christian Sabbath*, 1832).

⁷⁴ Iain D. Campbell, *ibid.*, 120.

⁷⁵ Walter J. Chantry, *Call the Sabbath a Delight* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000), 54. On this point, see James T. Dennison, Jr. *The Market Day of the Soul: The Puritan Doctrine of the Sabbath in England 1532-1700* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 119-22. For a brief consideration of the influence of Dispensationalism upon the validity and application of the Fourth Commandment, see pp. 52-70 in Chantry.

⁷⁶ "...for M. Ironside expressly consents in this, viz., "that all the commandments of the decalogue are moral, but every one in his proportion and degree, and so (saith he) is that of the Sabbath; it is moral for substance, but not for circumstance" Thomas Shepard, *ibid.*, 55.

⁷⁷ Philip S. Ross, *From the Finger of God: The Biblical and Theological Basis for the Threefold Division of the Law* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2010), 343-4. A case in point can be seen in D. A. Carson, who seems to equivocate between 'ceremonial' aspects and Jewish halakhah: "Even if such categories [viz. moral / ceremonial / civil] are applied, it should be noted that both David's law-breaking and that of the priests (found only in Matthew) come from *ceremonial* law. It is difficult, then, to resist the conclusion that their applicability to the Sabbath case puts Sabbath law in the ceremonial category with them" (*ibid.*, 69).

⁷⁸ cited by Philip Ross, *ibid.*, 345; from Lincoln's contribution to D. A. Carson (ed.), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*.

individual believer? Is it qualitatively superior to the salvation rest that the Psalmist knew (Ps. 116.7)?” He concludes: “the degree of ‘already’ in anti-Sabbatarian theology amounts to an over-realized eschatology... The epistles’ relative silence on the Sabbath suggests not that this obligation has been overturned, but that as surely as the Creator remains transcendent so it remains binding.”⁷⁹ Indeed, the Lord, *as* the ‘Lord of the Sabbath’...

“...hath particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy unto Him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which is called the Lord's Day: and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath...”⁸⁰

As strange as it may seem to the *West Wing* perspective of our current milieu, the Lord still places a yoke upon His people (Matt. 11.30). It is lighter yoke, to be sure (like going from solid oak to balsa wood!), but it is a yoke nonetheless. The Confessional depiction of the ‘Christian Sabbath’ is one aspect of the Lord’s yoke, which binds us the rugged work of mortification and conformity to His holy image.⁸¹ In Scripture, “to be a holy people as God is holy entails a necessary *imitatio Dei*... [the Decalogue] is about participating in God’s own sanctification in time and space of the divine name and image. This *imitatio Dei* is perhaps *most obvious in relation to the Sabbath*.”⁸² May the ‘Lord of the Sabbath’ help us to sanctify His worship unto the delight and rest of our souls.

⁷⁹ Philip Ross, *ibid.*, 344-5.

⁸⁰ Second London Baptist Confession (1689), 22.7.

⁸¹ Philip Schaff writes: “The day was transferred from the seventh to the first day of the week, not on the ground of a particular command, but by the free spirit of the gospel and by the power of certain great facts which lay at the foundation of the Christian church ... The universal and uncontradicted Sunday observance in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it had its roots in apostolic practice ... It is not a legal ceremonial bondage, but rather a precious gift of grace, a privilege, a holy rest in God in the midst of the unrest of the world, a day of spiritual refreshing in communion with God and in the fellowship of the saints, a foretaste and pledge of the never-ending Sabbath in heaven” (*ibid.*, 1:478). For a succinct analysis of properly inferring Sunday observance in the New Testament see Lane Keister, “The Sabbath Day and Recreations on the Sabbath: An Examination of the Sabbath and the Biblical Basis for the “No Recreation” Clause in Westminster Confession of Faith 21.8 and Westminster Larger Catechism 117” in *The Confessional Presbyterian* 5 (2009), 235-7.

⁸² Markus Bockmuehl, *ibid.*, 105 (emphasis mine).