

BOX 30A

WHAT WE SHOULD DO ON SUNDAY

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THE PROTESTANT FAITH

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What do you do on Sunday? and secondly what should you do on Sunday? It is a day any different from the rest of the week? It has always been called the Lord's Day which means that it is not really at our own disposal if the title is true.

The seven day week goes back beyond the mists of history. History cannot tell us how the idea of a seven day cycle began; it does not fit in with any of the normal phenomenon of the sun or the moon by which the ancient peoples normally divided time. The Bible says that God ordained the seven day cycle in order that six days might be working days by which men and women can sustain life and the seventh day was to be a rest day. It is plain that our created natures need regularly rest and holidays. God made this clear in the way the Scripture speaks about the story of creation. In six days God created everything and we read that on the seventh day he rested and he hallowed that day.

So the Lord's Day is given to us firstly for a day of rest from our ordinary avocations. The question then arises, what should we do with that day of rest, It should be quite obvious that we should take the opportunity of this leisure firstly to turn our thoughts back to God to refresh ourselves in his fellowship. The heavy labour that normally fills the daylight hours of men and women in order to sustain life does not give the opportunity for meditation and prayer and thanksgiving to God that we need for our spiritual growth and which we owe to him as our creator and Saviour and Lord. Consequently if we do not make the first use of our leisure time an opportunity of refreshing ourselves in fellowship with God we are plainly in the wrong. So whatever we do on Sunday must not crowd out this first obligation. Moreover the

Christian religion is a corporate religion. We have fellowship with God in Christ and at the same time we have fellowship with one another, for we are all united in Christ. The Christian, then, will use the Lord's Day not only for private fellowship and refreshment with his Saviour which is his higher priority but also for spiritual fellowship with his fellow christians. If we do not make this as our number one priority on the Lord's Day, we are dishonouring God for it should be plain that the first use of our leisure should be to turn back to him in thanksgiving for his creation and redemption, and prayer to him for his help and provision, and meditation on his glorious promise of our inheritance. The Lord's Prayer begins with the petition "Hallowed be thy name". In Genesis 2 God hallowed the day of rest, and we hallow his name by hallowing his day through seeking his fellowship as the first claim in the use of that day. Our other activities should be subordinate to this, they should not crowd it out time-wise nor should they exhaust us physically or mentally so that we cannot really enter into fellowship with God and with one another on his day. There are no absolute rules as to how we should keep the Lord's Day but we will certainly have to have our own rules and habits if we are going to honour God on his day. The way we use Sunday is a test of how we stand with God.

Christians have become very slack in the observance of Sunday and this shows that they are not putting their fellowship with God as their highest priority. So the way Sunday is observed may be taken as an indication of the reality of a persons christian profession. Let us see to it ourselves that we use the gift of Sunday to honour God by strengthening ourselves in him as we refresh ourselves physically by resting from our daily work.

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