

COMMENDATIONS

We believe in sola scriptura! But we also believe that Christ has been giving gifts to His church for these last 20 centuries. Indisputably, one of those gifts—and, indeed, one of the greatest of those gifts—was Charles Haddon Spurgeon. For us as Reformed Baptists, he ought to have the greatest respect that may be given to one of the pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11) given to Christ's church. We ought to listen and learn when he speaks, and especially when he speaks on an issue so practically important as the Christian Sabbath.

Brandon Rhea has done the church a great service by reminding us in this book of Spurgeon's confessional views of the Christian Sabbath and indeed of the law of God in general. May God give this book great influence for good!

Sam Waldron
Dean, Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary
Pastor, Grace Reformed Baptist Church,
Owensboro, Kentucky

Spurgeon was known as “The Prince of Preachers” and sometimes as “The Last of the Puritans.” As such, he held to the Puritan view of the Christian Sabbath as “The Market Day of the Soul.” Dr. Rhea has done a splendid job of presenting Spurgeon's view on the subject, much of it in Spurgeon's own words. He shows a remarkable knowledge of Spurgeon's vast writings as well as the literature about him on this subject, some of it not well known.

The book will be of interest both to fans of Spurgeon and those interested in the whole subject of the Christian Sabbath among Reformed Baptists.

Dr. Curt Daniel
Pastor, Faith Bible Church, Springfield, Illinois
Professor, Grace Bible Theological Seminary

I am thankful to see this book arrive, as Brandon Rhea's research makes a fascinating and welcomed contribution to what we know about C. H. Spurgeon and his understanding of the Christian Sabbath. What Rhea shows is that there is still much more to enjoy and learn from Spurgeon as readers follow him as his life points to Christ. Spurgeon scholars and readers old and new will benefit from this book.

Jason G. Duesing
Provost, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

In *Spurgeon's Forgotten Sabbatarianism*, scholar Brandon Rhea takes a deep dive into Spurgeon's theology and practices regarding the Sabbath. You may disagree with some of Spurgeon's conclusions, but you ought to face him, hear his arguments, and consider his appeal. I heartily commend this compellingly written and first-of-its kind book from Spurgeon expert Brandon Rhea.

Ray Rhodes, Jr.
Author of *Susie: The Life and Legacy of Susannah*
Spurgeon & Yours, till Heaven

The biblical doctrine of the Christian Sabbath is often ignored, misunderstood, and even unknown by the modern church and, consequently, those to whom the church is to be salt and light. Brandon Rhea does us all an enormous favor by reminding and teaching us that one of the “heroes” of the church, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was a Sabbath keeper *par excellence*. May this volume prove to be a catalyst in reigniting the fires of right Sabbath observance in our time.

T. C. Milton
Editor, *Spurgeon’s Forgotten Sabbatarianism*

Spurgeon's
FORGOTTEN
Sabbatarianism

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Sabbatarianism



*The Role of the Fourth Commandment in the
Life and Theology of the Prince of Preachers*

BRANDON RHEA

Foreword by Thomas J. Nettles



SPURGEON'S FORGOTTEN SABBATARIANISM

*The Role of the Fourth Commandment in the Life and
Theology of the Prince of Preachers*

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Published by Founders Press.

P.O. Box 150931 • Cape Coral, FL • 33915

Phone: (888) 525-1689

Electronic Mail: officeadmin@founders.org

Website: www.founders.org

Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN: 978-1-943539-44-4

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023948149

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Cover Design by: Perry Brown

*To Karise, Ian, Elizabeth, and Patrick.
Except for knowing the triune God,
you are my greatest treasure and joy.*

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FOREWORD

One sad point of disagreement among Bible-believing evangelicals has concerned the relation of law in the Old Testament to its perpetuity in the New. Were there indeed three levels of law given to Israel—moral, ceremonial, and civil—or was all of it a unit to pass away with the incipience of the new covenant and the arrival of the new and final Moses? Did the Ten Commandments constitute moral law that could not cease, or was all of it put to rest while those truly moral elements of Israel’s law found perpetuity by specific commands in the New Testament?

The historic Reformed confessional position was captured in the Second London Confession of the Baptists in its chapter 19, which give a clear statement on “ceremonial laws containing several typical ordinances” that pointed to Christ, whose work abrogated those predictive practices. Also, Israel was given “judicial laws which expired together with the state of that people.” On the other hand, “the moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof.” The Confession goes on to explain that true believers are not under the moral law as a covenant of works for either justification or condemnation but for sanctification, as a “rule of life, informing them of the will of God, and their duty.” Also, it leads to deeper levels of repentance by pointing out the “sinful pollutions of their natures, hearts, and lives,” leading them to examine “themselves thereby” to achieve “further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin.” Specifically

concerning the Sabbath, the Confession taught that the setting aside of one day in seven “for a Sabbath to be kept holy unto him” was a “positive, moral, and perpetual commandment.” Now in light of the resurrection of Christ, this day 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.”

The disagreement, therefore, is not whether such principles of immutable moral law exist for the purpose of driving Christians to holiness but whether they are presented wholly and without exception in the Ten Commandments. The obvious sticking point concerns the fourth commandment, the observance of the Sabbath. The argument of the one party says that the commandment, unlike the other nine, is never repeated in the New Testament. Also, the church did not gather on that day but on the first day of the week. Beyond that, there seems to be specific abrogation of the day in Paul’s instructions to Gentiles being harassed by Jewish zealots for the Mosaic economy: “Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath” (Colossians 2:16). Surely, including the Sabbath with regulations on food and drink and festivals means that it should be considered only as a requirement for Israel prior to the coming of Christ and the initiation of the new covenant.

The response includes these considerations. The Sabbath, a day of rest after the work of creation, was set within the world immediately upon God having finished creation with the creation of man in the persons of Adam and Eve. Does this not imply that they were aware of this and would have

peculiarly striking times of fellowship with their Creator on those Sabbath days? Under what law was Jesus crucified as a curse (Galatians 3:10–13)? To what law was His obedience of such perfection that He can be called “Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1) and can be the representative man in whose righteousness we are justified (Romans 5:17–19; 2 Corinthians 5:21)? What is the law that brings conviction of sin (Romans 7:9–14; Galatians 2:17–19)? According to what law did Christ die in the flesh for sin, transforming the law into a perfect guide used by the Spirit for sanctification (Romans 8:2–4)? If it is not the Ten Commandments, then we have no revelation of the law according to which all of these gospel realities were accomplished.

No Christian would disagree that the first table of the Commandments, those peculiarly Godward, are of eternal moral standing. The fourth commandment stands immovably in that first table and so must indicate something eternal about a necessity of regular worship in connection with a recognition of God’s rest, a day blessed and sanctified by God Himself (Genesis 2:3). That would lead to the observation that Colossians is not referring to the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments but to ceremonial sabbaths connected with the festivals and foods mentioned in the same verse. So, instead of observing the ceremonial law’s requirements of “days and months and seasons and years” (Galatians 4:10), we are led by the Spirit of Holiness into an internal conformity to those things implied in the Commandments—“against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:23). Since we are warned against “forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25), should

we not assume that, according to the pattern of first-day worship in the apostolic church, such a command establishes the first day as the God-ordained time to gather for worship, hearing of the word proclaimed, and mutual encouragement?

So why the shift from the seventh day to the first day of the week? Because on the first day, the Lord rose from the dead, indicating that He has now entered into His rest (Hebrews 4:10), having accomplished every requirement necessary to bring a “new creation” into this fallen world (2 Corinthians 5:14–17; Galatians 6:15). This probably is pictured in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. They had sinned, most likely on the Sabbath, while awaiting the coming of the Lord for palpable fellowship and instruction. They had been removed from the possibility of eternal death (Genesis 3:22, 23) and had been clothed by a redemptive sacrifice, a provision given by God Himself (3:21). The first day, therefore, out of the garden—the day following the Sabbath—was also the first full day in which they were conscious that God had granted a covering for sin and had removed from them the verdict of eternal death and sealed them from the possibility of that fatality.

This present discussion, which has so many implications for corporate worship and theological reflection, gives immediate relevance and intense interest to Brandon Rhea's discussion of Spurgeon's view of the Christian Sabbath. Spurgeon arguably was the most productive, consistent, and even uncompromising of English evangelicals of the nineteenth century. Rhea has demonstrated that much of Spurgeon's effectiveness, conviction, and consistency arose

from his personal understanding and appropriation of the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, as a Christian Sabbath. Rhea puts the reader on a literary perch to view Spurgeon as an heir of Sabbath discussions and practices in England in the first half of the nineteenth century. He points to several pivotal events in Spurgeon's life that God effected on Christian Sabbath days, including his death and his entry into eternal Sabbath. Rhea looks at the routine of Spurgeon's life as governed by Sabbath views held by his father and grandfather. Spurgeon's view, however, was not just a matter of an inheritance from his sire and grandsire but was a well-established, biblically founded, doctrinal conviction of Spurgeon himself. Rhea gives considerable attention to the theological defense of the perpetuity of the Sabbath in comparing Spurgeon's views to those set forth in chapters on the law and the Sabbath in the Second London Confession and the Baptist Catechism that the Metropolitan Tabernacle had adopted. The author's engagement with these sources and his comprehensive sampling of Spurgeon's viewpoint, expressed mainly, though not exclusively, in sermons throughout his ministry, is compelling and constitutes a successful demonstration of the main thesis of this book.

Another striking feature is Rhea's discussion of how Spurgeon preached and taught that the day should be kept. In a flurry of energetic citations, Rhea demonstrates that Spurgeon's view of Sabbath rest was far from that of taking a Sunday afternoon nap. True Christian rest meant separation of one's concerns from the normal and necessary business of the week and the engagement of one's heart and energy in service for the glory of God. Street preaching,

visitation of the destitute and the lost, giving aid to the needy, and a score of other ministry-oriented activities constituted true Christian rest. Reflecting the work of the old covenant priests in the temple, the Lord's Day was a time for the kingdom of priests to engage in offering to God the sweet-smelling savor of devotion and corporate worship, followed by the giving of the body throughout the day as a living sacrifice of holy activity for the spread of news about Christ.

Because of fellowship with God, His gospel, and His unchanging truth, as well as joining with others in attentive and scripturally regulated worship, the Christian looks forward to these times of service to speak about and lift up Christ as the one who gives victory over sin and death. This investment in eternity makes the Christian look forward to the Sabbaths that God has given here and to lament that they come to an end. All these things make the Christian long more earnestly for heaven, where "the Sabbath is eternal, the worship endless, the praise unceasing, the bliss unbounded."¹

Spurgeon made sobering and profound evangelistic application of the Sabbath also. He sought to convince unbelievers that soon they would have their sabbath-less existence where there would be no rest, no acts of mercy, no urgings of eternal life from gospel preaching, no special grace, no common grace, no godly persons to pray for them, no tenderness extended in the name of Christ but only the

¹ Charles Spurgeon, *The New Park Street Pulpit*, 23:524. Hereafter, *NPSP*.

relentless, just wrath of God. Those who would rest in Christ now, however, would find Sabbaths here a delight and then would “keep the eternal Sabbath before the throne.”²

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² Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 7:584.
Hereafter, *MTP*.

PREFACE

Dear Reader,

Sitting in a seminary classroom in Chicago, I heard my professor say, “Only nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament. Therefore, Christians are not obligated to keep the Sabbath.” Thus began my interest in the Christian Sabbath, the law of God, and the relationship of the Old Testament to the New. Like a pebble in my shoe, my professor’s statement kept pressing on my mind. After finishing seminary, I continued my theological studies and shifted from adhering to dispensationalism to confessing covenant theology. I then stumbled across the Second London Confession of Faith while a member of Faith Bible Church in Springfield, Illinois. Under the ministry of the church’s pastor, Curt Daniel, I became a settled Sabbatarian, especially after hearing his sermon series on the Ten Commandments. Yet, I still had questions. In 2017, I enrolled in the PhD program at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where I focused on Charles Spurgeon. After reading a myriad of his sermons, I kept noticing how Spurgeon grouped Sabbath breaking with other sins in his preaching. Suddenly, I had a dissertation topic, which, by God’s grace, I finished in 2021. The contents of those academic efforts have been turned into the book that is in your hands.

Why study on Spurgeon and the Sabbath and not on someone else? For example, the seventeenth-century English

Baptists who penned and adhered to the Second London Confession of Faith could illuminate to us how to keep the Sabbath. Their culture, however, was so different from ours. We live in an age with the internet, television, cars, airplanes, twenty-four-hour convenience stores, and NFL football. But Spurgeon's world is much closer to ours than the world of his predecessors. He lived in an innovative Victorian Age when the railroad and telegraph transformed travel and the spread of information. Meanwhile, the rural population flocked to the cities for industrial jobs, which put pressure on the norms of the English Sabbath. To promote secular transformation, anti-Sabbatarians argued against Sabbath laws and for shopping, entertainment, and sport on the Lord's Day. Spurgeon faced this rapid change and, despite the social pressure, remained a passionate Sabbatarian until the day he died. Choosing him as a case study for Sabbath keeping has brought greater clarity for me on how to live in the twenty-first century and has stoked in me a passion for worshiping and serving the Lord on His holy day.

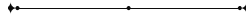
This book would not have been completed without the help of many. Drs. Duesing and Nettles guided me through the writing process of my dissertation, and Dr. Nettles graciously wrote the foreword. My fellow Spurgeon scholar Ed Romine has encouraged me, too, along with Curt Daniel and J. R. Crocker. Moreover, the church where I pastor, Faith Baptist Church in Kirksville, Missouri, has prayed for me. I also want to thank my fellow pastor and father-in-law, Robert Price, and his wife, Kerri, along with my parents, Kenny and Pam Rhea, for helping me and my wife navigate raising a family and completing this project. Finally, I praise

God for giving me my curious and supportive wife, Karise, along with our precious children—Ian, Elizabeth, and Patrick. Without you, this book would only have been a passing thought.

My prayer for you the reader is that by looking to Spurgeon you may then look to Christ—the Lord of the Sabbath.

**For God's glory,
Brandon Rhea**

CHAPTER 1



INTRODUCTION

On December 11, 1859, Charles Haddon Spurgeon preached his last sermon at the Surrey Music Hall.¹ For the previous three years, beginning with the tragedy on October 19, 1856, in which seven lives perished, Spurgeon held services at that venue.² To commemorate his last address, Spurgeon chose his text from Acts 20:26–27. He took Paul’s words as his own. The apostle said, “Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood

¹ Since Exeter Hall could not dedicate its building only to one congregation, circumstances forced New Park Street Church to seek other accommodations while they built a new facility. Spurgeon noted, “We did not go to the Music Hall because we thought that it was a good thing to worship in a building usually devoted to amusement, but because we had no other place to go to,” Charles Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon’s Autobiography, Compiled from His Diary, Letters, and Records, by His Wife, and His Private Secretary*, 2:196–199. This controversy appeared in a previous journal article. Brandon Rhea, “Three Sabbath Controversies in the Life of C. H. Spurgeon,” 23–41.

² Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 2:205. In the middle of the service, with an estimated 10,000–12,000 souls present, “all of a sudden there were cries simultaneously, doubtless preconcerted, from all parts of the building of ‘Fire!’ ‘The galleries are giving way!’ ‘The place is falling!’ the effect of which on the audience it is impossible to describe” (204). Due to the disaster, the church switched its services from Sunday evening to Sunday morning. W. Y. Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biography*, 98.

of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” With the precious seconds of the hourglass passing, the Prince of Preachers disclosed his agonizing love for the assembly’s souls. “If you come not to Christ it is not for want of calling, or because I have not wept over your sins, and travailed in birth for the souls of men. The one thing I have to ask of you is this:—bear me witness, my hearers, bear me witness, that in this respect I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have preached all that I know of the whole counsel of God.”³ Nevertheless, Spurgeon’s affection for these hearers could not stop him from moving the services to another location the following Sunday. This circumstance compels us to ask the question: What caused Spurgeon to stop holding services at the Surrey Music Hall? The first of four options to answering this question looks to the church’s new construction project. Did the congregation leave Surrey Music Hall to move into their new Metropolitan Tabernacle building? No, they did not. In fact, the church went back to Exeter Hall on December 18, 1859, and continued holding meetings there until March 31, 1861.⁴ For approximately fourteen months, the congregation waited for the funds and masonry to be raised before they could hold their first service in their new building.

³ Charles Spurgeon, *NPSP*, 6:30.

⁴ Charles Spurgeon, *MTP*, 7:161.

If their new church building remained unfinished, then option two investigates the Surrey Music Hall. Did this temporary venue inhibit Spurgeon’s gospel work? Did its architecture and layout make holding services there untenable long-term? No, even though the investors built the Music Hall for amusements, the building comfortably fit Spurgeon’s congregation and allowed him to evangelize to an even greater multitude. On the contrary, changing locations to Exeter Hall created capacity issues for Spurgeon’s flock. In a letter written by Spurgeon on December 26, 1859, and published on February 9, 1860, in “The Christian Watchman & Reflector,” Spurgeon detailed the plight. “For not one-half of my people can get into Exeter Hall, if they were all able to go so far, and alas, not a third of them can make it convenient to walk that distance.”⁵ Spurgeon’s fears became reality, because on the first Sunday at Exeter Hall the facility only fit a quarter of the audience of the previous week’s service.⁶ Thus, the congregation’s leaving Surrey Music Hall made attending onerous and decreased the attendance. From a building perspective, Exeter Hall reduced the reach of Spurgeon’s ministry.

The third possible option—small and declining attendance to the services at Surrey Music Hall—must be dismissed, too. Biographer E. W. Bacon noted, “For three years the Surrey Music Hall services continued with great success and

⁵ Charles Spurgeon, *Charles Spurgeon’s Letters to the Christian Watchman and Reflector, 1859–1863*, 19.

⁶ G. Holden Pike, *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 2:326.

manifest blessing.”⁷ On one occasion in 1857, the crowd filled the Hall up to standing room capacity within ten minutes of the doors opening.⁸ Fullerton supported Bacon’s statement. “There were, of course, ebbs and flows in the congregation, especially towards Christmas time, but the numbers at the end were as great as at the beginning.”⁹ Surrey Music Hall included in its sea of souls a diversity of classes and occupations. Bacon commented, “All classes of folk went to sit at his feet and hear the Word of God. Statesmen, soldiers, authors, artists, captains of industry, farmers, carters, clerks, factory workers, shopkeepers, thieves, prostitutes, ne’er-do-wells and drunks.”¹⁰ Charles Cavendish Fulke Greville, who served on the Privy Council and chronicled the British monarchy in his *Greville Memoirs*, recorded the details of his visit to hear Spurgeon. According to him, the pastor had “a very clear and powerful voice, which was heard through the whole hall” as he preached to 9000 individuals.¹¹ The preaching had “great effect,” as illustrated by Greville’s observation of “the handkerchiefs

⁷ Ernest W. Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans*, 56.

⁸ Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans*, 56.

⁹ Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biography*, 110.

¹⁰ Bacon, *Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans*, 56–57. Among the dignitaries who visited the Surrey Music Hall during these services, Bacon listed “the Lord Chief Justice Campbell, the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs of London, Earl Russell, Lord Alfred Paget, Lord Panmure, Earl Grey, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Marquis of Westminster, Lord Carlisle, the Earl of Elgin, Baron Bramwell, Lady Rothschild and Miss Florence Nightingale” (56).

¹¹ Charles Cavendish Fulke Greville, *The Greville Memoirs: A Journal of the Reigns of King George IV, King William IV, and Queen Victoria*, 85.

and audible sobs.”¹² Hence, the Surrey Music Hall provided Spurgeon with new ministry opportunities to preach to a myriad of souls who under other circumstances could not have heard him. Given his success in filling the Surrey Music Hall, the need for a facility while they built the Metropolitan, and the smaller capacity and limiting location for congregants at Exeter Hall, why did Spurgeon choose to move his services?

The real justification for leaving the Surrey Music Hall lands on Spurgeon’s understanding of the Christian Sabbath. For him, the managers of the venue forced him to choose between biblical faithfulness or pragmatic considerations. At the beginning of the last service, he explained, “However sorrowful it may be to me to part with you, whose faces I have so long seen in the throng of my hearers, yet for Christ’s sake, for the sake of consistency and truth, we are compelled to withdraw from this place, and on the next Sabbath morning hope to worship God in Exeter Hall.”¹³ In his mind, to continue renting the facility would require him to be inconsistent and not to walk in the truth. He therefore took his theological stand despite the disadvantages of meeting at Exeter Hall.

For three years, Spurgeon’s congregation rented the Surrey Music Hall for the morning service, but they did not meet there in the evening. As a facility designed to make revenue, the owners wanted to provide shows on Sunday evenings to increase profits. Even though this plan would not interfere

¹² Greville, *Memoirs*, 85.

¹³ Spurgeon, *NPSP*, 6:32.

with Spurgeon's morning service, he objected. He clarified the events which led to the congregation's exodus in a letter to *The Christian Watchman and Reflector*:

The proprietors of the last named place had twice attempted to open it on Sunday evenings for music and amusements. I was, however, able to prevent this by threatening to cease my occupation, and as we paid a rent of more than £700 a year, (\$3500,) [sic] they were not willing to lose so large a sum, and therefore gave up their unhallowed design. Now, however, they have conceived the idea that my preaching injures them; for the people will not come to dance and drink on week days in a place where the Word is thundered out on Sunday mornings. This, I think, is very likely to be a near guess at the truth; for two companies have been broken up since I have preached there, and a blind man can see the end of the present one. I left the place on the very day upon which it was opened for Sunday desecration.¹⁴

While Spurgeon would not be breaking the Christian Sabbath himself, he still could not give money to a business that did. He would not have the church meet in a venue which encouraged and provided avenues to sin through Sabbath breaking. For him, this decision tested his character,

¹⁴ Spurgeon, *Charles Spurgeon's Letters to the Christian Watchman and Reflector, 1859–1863*, 19. See also Justin D. Fulton, *Charles H. Spurgeon, Our Ally*, 103–104. He included another quotation where Spurgeon gives the same justification for leaving.

adherence to his surname, and fidelity to the truth. “You can therefore perceive that I should be a craven to the truth, that I should be inconsistent with my own declarations, that, in fact, my name would cease to be a Spurgeon if I yielded. I neither can nor will give way in anything in which I know I am right; and in defence of God’s holy Sabbath the cry of this day is, ‘Arise, let us go hence!’”¹⁵ For this pastor, to ignore the actions of the Surrey Music Hall owners would be to renounce his family’s convictions regarding the Lord’s Day and to disobey God’s clear command. He therefore fought the Sabbath breakers by ending his lease with them.

As illustrated through this story, the Christian Sabbath mattered to Spurgeon. He fought to keep the day holy according to his understanding of Scripture. Due to his convictions, he moved his successful three-year ministry at the Surrey Music Hall to an inferior venue, which he knew would constrict his influence. Yet, Spurgeon’s theological views regarding the Christian Sabbath outweighed other expedient factors. To the chagrin of the Surrey Music Hall’s owners, he lived out his theology despite the cost. For Spurgeon, keeping the Christian Sabbath was essential for the Christian and the church.

WHY ANOTHER BOOK ON CHARLES SPURGEON?

Since Spurgeon’s death in 1892, individuals have written many articles and books on his life and theology. Between his homiletics, hermeneutics, evangelism, physical pain, depression, Puritan theology, social views, and

¹⁵ Spurgeon, *NPSP*, 6:32.

philanthropy, the secondary literature has covered broad areas of Spurgeon's life. Due to his prolific writings, however, scholars have vast lands of unconquered territory to explore. One such parcel in this land centers on Spurgeon's view of the Christian Sabbath, which, before this work, has never been studied.

This book will uncover four new insights. First, it will show the importance of the Christian Sabbath to Spurgeon through a biographical lens. Most books on Spurgeon's life hit the same peaks and valleys. However, no one has looked at how he lived one day in every seven. How did he live out the Christian Sabbath in his youth, young adult days, and more mature years? What important life events took place on Sunday? Furthermore, how did he arrange his schedule? How did he enjoy the day while he was free from his pastoral responsibilities in Mentone, France? The coming chapters will answer these questions and provide specifics of his regular rhythm for observing the Christian Sabbath.

Second, to explain Spurgeon's exegetical support for the Christian Sabbath, this investigation will establish Spurgeon's view of the law of God. Did he accept the teaching from chapter 19 of the Second London Confession of Faith (2LCF)? Did he hold to a three-part division of the law—moral, ceremonial, and judicial? Or did he modify the Confession's teaching?

Third, the study will examine Spurgeon's confessionalism. Some publications do mention 2LCF being placed in the cornerstone of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, or Spurgeon's reprinting of the Confession. Nevertheless, no one has provided overwhelming evidence that Spurgeon held to

2LCF not only in general but also in particular. This research into his views on the Christian Sabbath will either strengthen or weaken his connection with the Particular Baptist heritage of the seventeenth century.

Fourth, this monograph will systematically chronicle Spurgeon's view of the Christian Sabbath. This includes comparing Spurgeon's views with 2LCF to establish if he viewed the Lord's Day as a Sabbath and held to the three categories of allowable works—works of piety, mercy, and necessity—for Sunday.

After examining Spurgeon's practice and instruction on the Christian Sabbath, this book will argue that Charles Spurgeon held to the view of the Christian Sabbath found in the Second London Confession of Faith of 1689. To that end, chapter 2 will trace Spurgeon's biography through the lens of the Sabbath. Through the examination of his Sabbath practices in his youth, in London, and in Mentone, France, along with numerous Sabbath-breaking controversies, Spurgeon's love and interest in the Sabbath will shine forth. Chapter 3 will posit that Spurgeon held to 2LCF's view of the law of God by comparing each paragraph from chapter 19 of 2LCF to Spurgeon's writings. Since Spurgeon did not preach or write on most of the Sabbath passages in the Bible, this chapter will establish his hermeneutical foundation for a perpetual Sabbath based upon the moral law. Continuing to chapter 4, the argument will show that Spurgeon held to 2LCF's view of the Christian Sabbath. The chapter will explain and compare paragraphs 22.7 and 22.8 of 2LCF to Spurgeon's works. It will show that Spurgeon believed the Sabbath transferred from Saturday to Sunday, the Lord's

Day. He furthermore taught the allowance for works of necessity, mercy, and piety on the Christian Sabbath. The chapter will conclude with how Spurgeon went beyond the language of 2LCF about the Christian Sabbath, but did not contradict it, when he emphasized keeping the Sabbath with joy and when he classified the eschaton as the eternal Sabbath. Finally, chapter 5 will summarize the previous chapters and conclude that Spurgeon held to 2LCF's view of the Christian Sabbath. This section, moreover, will take principles from Spurgeon's theology and apply them to our twenty-first-century context.

WHY COMPARE SPURGEON TO 2LCF?

Considering the numerous Baptist confessions in church history, why should Spurgeon's view be analyzed against 2LCF? Why not use the First London Confession of 1644, the Orthodox Creed of 1678, or the Statements of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland?¹⁶ As will be shown, Spurgeon personally subscribed to and publicly advocated for Christians to read and study 2LCF.¹⁷ Consequently, Spurgeon's theology can be compared with this confession for six reasons.

¹⁶ Spurgeon famously rejected the Baptist Union's statement over the Down-Grade controversy. William Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, 358–359.

¹⁷ Only in the area of church government did Spurgeon depart from the confession. He practiced a “modified form of Episcopalian Presbyterian Independency.” Tom Nettles, *Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*, 244. For the original reference, see Spurgeon, *MTP*, 7:257.

First, early in his London ministry, Spurgeon had the Confession republished. To combat “the slanders and calumnies by which [he] was assailed,” Spurgeon had his publishers, Alabaster and Passmore, produce a new edition. Under the title *The Baptist Confession of Faith*, Spurgeon introduced 2LCF to another generation. Through these actions, he imitated the first pastor of his church, Benjamin Keach, who signed the Confession in 1689 at the General Assembly in London.¹⁸

Second, Spurgeon recommended the Confession to all Christians “who rejoice in the glorious doctrines of free grace.” To Spurgeon, 2LCF contained an “excellent list of doctrines” that “may aid the cause of the glorious gospel” through studying its contents. Hence, Spurgeon understood 2LCF as instructing Christians in the shared beliefs of salvation through grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone.¹⁹

Third, Spurgeon prompted the Confession’s study among his congregation. He called it the “most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us” and revealed one of his motivations for reprinting it: for the “younger members ... to have a Body of Divinity in small compass, and by means of the Scriptural proofs.” He wanted to equip the saints to “be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them” (160). Reflecting several years later, Spurgeon did not change his view. He wrote, “I would, at the present time, just as earnestly commend to my fellow-Christians the

¹⁸ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 2:159.

¹⁹ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 2:160.

prayerful study of *The Baptist Confession of Faith* as I did in the early years of my ministry in London” (161). To encourage its study, the church usually ensured every family received a copy for private study.²⁰ In Spurgeon’s view, along with examination of Scripture, the congregation should use the Confession as a “useful compendium of doctrinal knowledge,” with the result of a “well-instructed people.”²¹ Spurgeon, therefore, recommended the Confession to his congregation from the beginning to the end of his ministry. Fourth, the congregation placed 2LCF in the cornerstone of the new church building. Due to Spurgeon’s popularity, the New Park Street building could not hold the Sunday crowds. Consequently, the church raised funds to build a facility at a new location. At the ceremony for laying the cornerstone, the leaders placed in it the Bible, because “the Word of God—we put that as the foundation of our church.” In addition, they laid the “old Baptist Confession of Faith,” symbolizing its role in describing the church’s beliefs. The last items consisted of documents from the ceremony and Dr. Rippon’s Hymn Book. The Metropolitan Tabernacle held to *sola scriptura*, and 2LCF enumerated what they believed the Bible taught.²²

Fifth, Spurgeon quoted from the Confession in one of his sermons. While teaching on the doctrine of election, he read the full paragraph from article 3 of chapter 3, “Of God’s

²⁰ Spurgeon, *MTP*, 8:93.

²¹ Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 2:306.

²² Spurgeon, *NPSP*, 5:351. See also Spurgeon, *MTP*, 7:100–101; Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 2:323.

Decrees.” He justified its use because “we are Baptists in this congregation—the greater part of us at any rate—and we like to see what our own forefathers wrote.”²³ The seventeenth-century Particular Baptists provided a deep well of theology for Spurgeon. He often went with his doctrinal pail to the past to learn more about the faith.

Sixth, Spurgeon published guides which illuminated the doctrine of 2LCF. Using the Westminster Shorter Catechism as a guide, in 1855 he published his own resource that expounded, through a question-and-answer format, the teachings of 2LCF. He believed it to be “a great safeguard against the increasing errors of the times,” if his people used it in their homes.²⁴ Moreover, he recommended and republished Thomas Watson’s *A Body of Divinity*, a series of sermons on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. It “is one of the most precious of the peerless works of the Puritans; and those best actuated with it prize it most,” according to Spurgeon. To pass on the same doctrine, Spurgeon assigned the work to the students at The Pastor’s College.²⁵ He, however, made one addition. While he did not alter Watson’s writings on paedobaptism, he did add an appendix that defended believer’s baptism.²⁶

²³ Spurgeon, *NPSP*, 1:313.

²⁴ Charles Spurgeon, *A Puritan Catechism*, 3. See Thomas Nettles and Steve Weaver, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: The Study of Catechism in Baptist Life*, 118–119.

²⁵ Thomas Watson, *A Complete Body of Divinity: Sermons upon the Westminster Shorter Catechism*, iii.

²⁶ Watson, *A Complete Body of Divinity*, 641–651.

Thus, based upon these six reasons, comparing Spurgeon's view of the Christian Sabbath to 2LCF would be a fair treatment.

CONCLUSION

Even though leaving the Surrey Music Hall caused Spurgeon to suffer in the short term, in the end, his ministry continued to thrive. During his last sermon at Exeter Hall on March 31, 1861, the pastor reflected upon the venue's role in bringing many to faith in Christ. He declared, "For there are very many residents in the West-end, who have in this place come to listen to the Word, who probably might not have taken a journey beyond the river; and here God's grace has broken the hard heart; here have souls been renewed, and wanderers been reclaimed."²⁷

As for the Surrey Music Hall, it died the death of a cursed man, only to see Spurgeon standing triumphantly over its grave. The owners filed for bankruptcy after Spurgeon departed. Since they lost the income from the church and their Sunday evening shows drew small crowds, they could not pay their bills. Then, fire burned down the building, and residential housing replaced it.²⁸ The gospel witness, however, did not experience the same fate. In 1891, the Tabernacle, with Spurgeon's leading, helped to raise funds to build the Surrey Gardens Memorial Hall, which stood

²⁷ Spurgeon, *MTP*, 7:166.

²⁸ Fullerton, *C. H. Spurgeon: A Biography*, 110.

near the old Music Hall, to hold services.²⁹ Bankruptcy and fire silenced the music and amusements, but the Surrey Music Hall owners could not silence the preaching of the gospel in that area. Thus, decades later, Spurgeon's shadow still loomed large over the Surrey Music Hall's ruins. God rewarded his obedience to the Word.

²⁹ Robert Shindler, *From the Usher's Desk to The Tabernacle Pulpit*, 106. Shindler summarized this development: "This [the Surrey Gardens Memorial Hall] was erected in 1891, in Penrose Street, Walworth, close to the site of the Surrey Gardens, at the cost of £3,000, as a home for one of the many branch schools and missions connected with the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and especially to commemorate the gracious work of God, in saving many hundreds of souls by the preaching of the gospel in the Music Hall."