

# **Whatever Happened to the Lord's Day?**

by Irvin Himmell

Banished to the lonely island of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, the beloved John wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). It is fitting that the first day of the week be recognized as the Lord's Day. In a sense every day belongs to the Lord, but the first day should be His in a special way. It is the day of the glorious resurrection, the day when the saints assemble to break bread, and the day when Christians lay by in store as prospered. (Mark 16:9; Acts 7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

## **Cleanup Day**

Many people use the first day of the week (Sunday) to wash the car, mow the lawn, trim the hedge, rake leaves, repair the yard fence, paint the house, and a variety of other chores. It is their day to catch up on doing little odds and ends.

## **Sports Day**

Some consider Sunday as the day for sporting events. The television networks offer a full afternoon and evening for the sports enthusiast. During football season he can watch one game right after another due to changes in time zones across the country. There is tennis, baseball, soccer, skiing, basketball, wrestling, boxing, and a lot more. Some Christians are so wrapped up in sports that when they arrive at the meeting house for the Lord's day evening service their first question is, "Did you watch the game this afternoon?" Their thoughts are game centered. Others do not bother to come on Sunday evenings; they are still glued to the TV set.

## **Recreation Day**

The roads leading to the beaches here in Florida are crowded on the Lord's Day. The day is used for golfing, for fishing, for taking the family on an outing, for bowling, for skating, for going to the park. Some make it very clear that to them it is recreation day, not the Lord's Day. They will swim, romp, run, eat, play, and have a merry time; they will visit relatives, drive through the country, or plan a picnic; they will play ball, have a cook-out, or shoot pool. It is too bad about the Lord, the church, and the Bible. These folks prefer recreation over service to God.

## **Lazy Day**

Then there are those who regard Sunday as their day to be lazy. They sleep until nearly noon. They take up an hour or two leisurely browsing through the big Sunday edition of the newspaper. They eat a big dinner and settle back for a restful afternoon. Perhaps they watch a movie on TV, or take a long nap, or go for a stroll, or spend much

of the afternoon shopping. Nothing spiritually constructive is planned. Worship and Bible study have not part in their day. To them it is not the Lord's Day; it is their own lazy day.

### **Another Work Day**

For an increasingly large number of people, the Lord's Day is just another work day. They have signed up for a job that requires regular Sunday work with time off on some other day. The job may be at a fast-food chain, a store that stays open on Sundays, a service station, a plant or factory, a utility company, a hospital, a fire department, a public transportation firm, or any one of hundreds of other business operations. If asked about church attendance, they quickly reply, "I have to work on Sundays." They have no interest in seeking employment where they could be given Sundays off. They never protest Sunday work. Their vocation takes priority over the Lord and spiritual interests on the Lord's Day. It is as if the other days of the week are not enough for occupational work; they must rob the Lord of His day and the devotion and homage due Him. So when Sunday comes, it is rushing off to work as usual. There is no real Lord's Day in their weekly calendar.

### **The Lord's Day**

The Lord's Day ought to be a very special day to the Lord's people. Just as the Lord's Supper is no ordinary supper, the Lord's Day is no ordinary day.

Many Christians devote the day to worship, quiet meditation and study, visiting the sick and shut-ins, calling on people who need teaching and admonition, and other spiritually-centered activities. Surely this befits the day.

Philip Schaff says, "Next to the Church and the Bible, the Lord's day is the chief pillar of Christian Society." (History of the Christian Church, Vol. 1, p. 479). John was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day. Too many of us are in the wrong spirit—the spirit that is of the world—on the Lord's Day. Perhaps we need to drop "Sunday" from our vocabulary and restore the Biblical term, "the Lord's day."

Looking around us in a society that shows less and less interest in Christianity, and observing the actions of many who profess Christianity but have imbibed too much of the spirit of the world, we are made to wonder, what ever happened to the Lord's day?