

### Part Three (Five / 1)

The “**dawn**” of the Yom Yahweh was the “afternoon shadow”<sup>Joel 2:2, Micah 3:6 Zep.1:15, Is.58:9</sup> “a day of darkness” of the Passover. **In man’s eyes in death the light of life was sniffed. But**, In the “noon” of the Yom Yahweh,<sup>Schilder</sup> “like a spring of waters whose waters fail not”, Life emerged: “God manifest in the flesh, is justified in the Spirit!”<sup>1Tm.3:16</sup> It was “In the Sabbath”.<sup>Mt.28:1</sup>

#### Paragraph 7.7.

#### The Sabbath, Cosmic–Eschatological Sign

##### 7.7.1.

#### The Coming God

#### The Sabbath of the Creation

With Reference to Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*

John 1:3, “All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made”. (*Panta di’ autou egeneto kai chohris autou egeneto oude hen ho gegonen.*)

Mark 2:27-28, “The Sabbath Day was made for the sake of man ... so is the Son of man Lord verily of the Sabbath”. (*To sabbaton dia ton anthropon egeneto ... hohste Kyrios estin ho Yios tou anthropon kai tou sabbatou.*)

Revelation 3:14, “These things says the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.” (*Tade legei ho Amehn, ho Martys ho Pistos kai Alethinos, heh Archeh tehs ktiseohs tou Theou.*) The Amen, that is, the Last, is also the Beginning, verily the Beginning of creation!

Colossians 1:15-17, “By Him all things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities. It all has been created through Him and for Him. He verily is before all things and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body the Church – He who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead in order that He in all things may hold pre-eminence.”

Because all things created by God are made through Christ and for Christ, their continued existence is preserved in Christ, through Christ and for Christ. The future of all things created are contained and ensured in Him.

If Christ be “appointed heir of all things” (Hb.1:2) then “for Him and by Him all things are”. (1:10a) It comes about not by the creation of all things, but “by the grace of God (that) He should taste death for every

man”. (1:9c) By “making the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings”, (1:10b) He is “crowned with glory and honour”! (:9) Through the death and resurrection of “the Captain of their salvation ... many sons are brought unto glory” (1:10).

**In God’s judgement Jesus’ resurrection is the judgement** (Mt.12:41–42). Not risen in Christ no man will be raised unto eternal life in the Kingdom of God. “Be found in Him having that righteousness **which is through the faith of Christ** ... that I may know ... the power of **his resurrection**” ... “**in the afternoon of the Sabbath**”.

##### 7.7.1.1.

#### A Christ-Centred View of the Sabbath’s Perpetuity

#### New Alternatives

16 January 2002

Dear Dr. John Webster,

I greet you as before (23 May 2001), praying for your wellbeing and happiness in Jesus Christ.

A year has sped past since our Conference on *The Situationalisation of the Sabbath in South Africa*. Life has been shortened for us that much in the meantime. I’m 61 one of these days God willing, and recently was thoroughly reminded of life’s frailty. I don’t know if I shall be visited by grace like that again. I’m telling you these things because I’m so anxious to answer you properly on your lecture. But you asked that it should not be used because it’s not finished yet.

**I can no longer delay** to tell you that though you are very optimistic for the Sabbath’s sake about Moltmann in his book *God in Creation*, you are seriously mistaken. The orthodox Christian Confession and Doctrine are lying under siege in Moltmann’s dogmatics. He contributes nothing positively Scriptural, positively Christ-centred or positively “*Trinitarian*” to the “*theological dimensions of the Sabbath*”. He ingeniously and “*scholarly*” but **confirms** “*consensus*” on “*important aspects ... of the Sabbath problem.*” He confirms consensus by strictly limiting Sabbath Doctrine under “*the doctrine of creation*”.

As for the Sabbath Moltmann succeeds in distorting its doctrine simply through **misplacing** it. On that Conference I asked you, even before your Lecture, where Moltmann places the Sabbath, and where Barth puts it? In my previous writing to you I referred to the same question. The Sabbath does not primarily belong under the prologomenon of *Creation*; its starting point is Christology and Soteriology as it should be for all Christian Confession. ( Remember my ‘black hole’ concept for Christian Dogmatics and Eschatology? ) Now Moltmann of course treats on the Sabbath, but ever indirectly, never for its own merit or profit;

never under another “first principle” of Christ’s “dominion”. The Sabbath “completes” “nature”, full stop.

Compare your heading for Section C, p. 5 ... while referring to Barth! : “The Protestant Rediscovery of the Sabbath – The Christological-Ethical Turn” Excellent! ( “Barth’s legacy still remains”, CS. p. 6. “The problems hammered out (by) ... Barth have by no means become out of date and superseded”. (GC, Preface, 1<sup>st</sup> par.) The Reformers themselves could not have dreamt of it. It took, first, the burning to ashes of all the old advances against “polemical ... historical and textual considerations” of Sabbath-Truth. (CS. p. 2, par. 1, 2.) Two, It required a soldier of Theology who, first, himself fought in the frontline in the War of Ethics (Nazism, Socialism, Modernism, Higher Criticism, you name it!), and, Two, who – on even higher level of gallantry – served in that war under Commander from God’s Headquarters, Scriptures. Only a man like Barth (one among 20 centuries of great men), could be able to place the Sabbath under the prologomena of Christology and Soteriology, and, effectively put it there even under the heading, *Doctrine of Creation*. You must agree, the sad absence of these qualities in *God in Creation*.

Nevertheless, as you say, a “new stage” has been entered wherein the questions regarding the invalidity for Christians of the Sabbath and the validity of the First Day of the week for Christians, no longer concern “exegetical”, “polemical ... historical and textual considerations” because these have demonstrated unequivocally the genuineness of only the Sabbath’s claim. *The ushering in of this new phase meant that it must be accepted that the practice of Sunday keeping – “even of a minimal kind”* (as by *the early Church*, allegedly, *can no longer be sufficiently supported*.

“... (T)he only way to decide between the two practices would be to rely on a theological appraisal of the alternatives: ... the Christian meaning of the Sabbath ... contrasted with a theology of Sunday”.

The stage might have been ushered in already, but the stage has not yet been properly set for the drama to start. A. No “theological appraisal of alternatives” can be reached while all the alternatives are not on stage. And, B. No “theological appraisal of alternatives” can start before any fake alternatives have been thrown off the stage and out the theatre.

I find a lot of “meaning of the Sabbath” in GC, but NO “Christian meaning of the Sabbath”. If both “a theology of Sunday” and “the Christian meaning of the Sabbath” were to lay claim on “The Christological Turn” of the “appraisal”, and **Jesus’ resurrection** from the dead indeed occurred on the **First** Day of the week, the Sabbath is going to come second and last and lost. Because, “Christian Faith that is not Resurrection Faith is neither Christian, nor Faith”. (Moltmann!) For this reason it is not superfluous at all, or unnecessary, to revive the old,

“polemical ... historical and textual considerations”, and “what might be called the problem of the “chronology of the Sabbath” ... the question of its origin, history and time of observance”. (p. 1, par. 1.) On these “questions” as well – not exclusively or primarily but as well – depend the question on **which day** of the week Christ rose from the dead. But **primarily**, the answer to the **chronological** question of which day of the week Christ rose from the dead, depends on what you call the “theological appraisal of the alternatives; the Christian meaning of the Sabbath”. In the *Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace* Parts 1 and 2, I try to explain the “technical” aspect of the problem, the “polemical ... historical (first century only) and textual considerations”, and *what might be called the (Old Testament / Passover) problem of the “chronology of the Sabbath” ... the question of its origin, history and time of observance*.

Howbeit, here are a few thoughts on Moltmann, *God in Creation*, which you are well acquainted with. Today only to start with. The rest may follow in fragments, depending on whether you are interested. If it is not too much to ask – I know your time is precious – kindly give your criticism on my attempt as I need it for use in my next Paragraph of *The Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace*, Part Five, Par. 7.7, The Sabbath – Cosmic Eschatological Sign, Par. 7.7.1, **A Christ-Centred View of the Sabbath’s Perpetuity**.

It is an impossible task to appreciate the one concept the Sabbath in isolation of the rich spectrum of thought in *God in Creation*, especially since the purpose of my investigation is not the same as Moltmann’s. My own purpose was to determine if and in what measure Moltmann thought on the Sabbath: As being and for being, the **Christian** Day of Worship-Rest?

What I am looking for, is a Sabbath-conception in Moltmann (*God in Creation*) that will evoke an idea like yours, “The Christian meaning of the Sabbath which could then be contrasted with a theology of Sunday” (end par.2, p. 2), or, “The Sabbath ... in the context of ... the broader Gospel ... in connection (with) justification and grace”. (p. 4, 3.)

Moltmann is a **lifetime away** from saying it.

I cannot find it. And I’m sure I’m not blind or mentally blunt. I was able to find the **Christian Sabbath** in Barth, and in Schilder – even in Edwards – despite its being dissected from its vital organs and transplanted onto the wrong donee.

Where to start then?

### 7.7.1.2. The Ecological Sabbath

You refer to many things Moltmann says in his *Preface to God in Creation*. I think it is the right place to start. But allow me first to illustrate Moltmann's thinking by a **typical example**.

"According to Biblical traditions", says Moltmann, "creation is aligned to its redemption from the very beginning; for the creation of the world points forward to the Sabbath, 'the feast of creation'." (Par. 1, Section 3, p. 5)

Traditionally the 'creation' of the Sabbath receives a linear, evolutionary explanation in Christian thinking. How is "creation aligned to its redemption"? How does "the creation of the world point forward to the Sabbath"? "On the Sabbath the creation is completed", Moltmann follows through his reasoning. Notice the direction: creation towards Sabbath: Creation is completed >>> on the Sabbath. Moltmann does not mean Day one of creation, then day two etc. up till "on the Seventh Day". No, he means from its inception onwards, creation is aligned towards its future that is its redemption that is its Sabbath. Moltmann preserves the traditional horizontal conception of the Sabbath. His conception though, differs in several respects from Augustine's (4<sup>th</sup> / 5<sup>th</sup> century AD) that can be taken for the typical Christian viewpoint. Augustine's is a post-creation, heavenly Sabbath without end. Moltmann's is a Sabbath that strictly belongs to earthly history and specifically and exclusively the earthly history of "God's Israel". Moltmann's Sabbath is "fulfilled within 'creation'" and history; Augustine's Sabbath is fulfilled in itself and only in the New Creation **after** "history" and "creation". Moltmann's creation-Sabbath ends with and in its fulfilment with and in the ending of "God's Israel". For Moltmann the Sabbath is still going on because it has found its place in Israel that is still going on in "creation". Moltmann's "Sabbath of creation" **ends** in itself – it ends in creation; and in "God's Israel". But Moltmann's "Sabbath of creation" is **fulfilled, not** in itself, and **not** in "creation" or "Israel", but in the "Christian Sabbath", in "the first day of the new creation", "the First Day of the week". (p. 7 ln. 1 and p. 6 last line)

"The aspect and prospect of creation is (sic.) perceived on the Sabbath, and only then" (p. 6 ln. 4-6) The aspect and prospect of creation – not of 'the new creation' – are "perceived on the Sabbath". Only **creation** can be seen in all this. Creation can only be **understood** – "perceived" / imagined – in all this. The "Sabbath of creation" has no further "prospect". Moltmann's is an argument **against** the Genesis and Exodus Sabbath's validity for the Christian Faith. It's no positive word for it.

Moltmann does not argue for the perpetuity of the Sabbath as the **Seventh Day** of creation – creation Sabbath is past! "On the Sabbath the creation is completed. The Sabbath is the pre-figuration of the world to come. So, when we present creation in the light of its future (in concepts like) 'the glory of God' ... then we are developing a Sabbath doctrine of creation."

The emphasis here, is Moltmann's, and clearly mainly falls on the word, "creation". In order not to be misled into a christological or soteriological impression of the Sabbath's "pre-figurative" meaning it is important to here keep in mind Moltmann's dispensational separation of "creation" and "the new creation". For Moltmann the Sabbath of "creation" is the Sabbath of "God's Israel", with the emphasis on "Israel", and not on "God's". Even "the Scriptures he devoted attention to", was "Israel's Scriptures", not God's Word. "The best creation wisdom is to be found in the Jewish theology and practice of the Sabbath. In abandoning the Sabbath, the Gentile Christian churches have lost this means of access 'to the doctrine of creation'". (Preface, p. 13.) The Sabbath and the Scriptures on the Sabbath, have nothing more to offer Christianity. (So we are back to square one of the traditional Christian dogmaticism so repugnant to Moltmann of the Bible and the whole Bible equally the Word of God and not of men etc. For Moltmann, "The Sabbath of Creation", is "creation" firstly and lastly. For Moltmann, the Sabbath is no more than an object lesson for ecological preservation. Moltmann still cherishes some nice thoughts about the Sabbath – more than tradition or any previous or contemporary theologian. He is acclaimed for the beauty of his compositions with the Sabbath as subject, but when it comes to "factuality" and "practicality", his thoughts serve no purpose but the theological, mental exercise of "developing a sabbath doctrine of creation". "What this means ... is the aspect and prospect of creation which is perceived on the sabbath" – "perceived" by the "we" who are "developing a doctrine of the Sabbath" – and that a "sabbath doctrine of creation".

Notice how Moltmann says, "on the sabbath". Whenever the Sabbath is relevant, it simply is the time-space of the Seventh Day in the tradition of Israel. He won't say "in the Sabbath" because that implies instrumental value. It will also not be without the preposition because that could imply more than spatial quality.

I'm still waiting for my German copy of *GC*, and may be mistaken in the above deducements. But I am willing to take the risk, because my inferences are in line with the trend of Moltmann's thinking.

For Moltmann a Sabbath of salvation does not exist and has never before existed. It is important not to get the idea Moltmann is a Sabbatarian who will always see what he would call "biblicist" ideas in

“*the doctrine of the Sabbath*”. (I think I saw this word “*biblicist*” somewhere?) When Moltmann speaks of the Sabbath as “*the prefiguration of the world to come*” he contemplates “*nature as creation*” – not otherwise and not the Sabbath in the context of the salvation of believers. No, no. Lastly, for Moltmann, the Sabbath re-appears in Jesus’ history at the start of his ministry but soon and finally – **here, with the ending of Jesus’ own history as “creation” and nowhere else – vanishes** from history ... and from creation! Moltmann isn’t “orthodox”! Not even “liberal”! He simply gives the traditional concepts, “Jewish”, “Old Testament”, “Law”, *et al*, the name of “*creation*”. Moltmann is a “dispentationalist”.

From the cross and resurrection of Jesus, the “*Christian Sabbath*”, the “*First Day of the week*”, marks the beginning of “*the Messianic era*” which must be viewed neither as “*history*” nor as “*creation*”. (Moltmann must be a modernist.)

That is the overall impression Moltmann’s views in this Chapter leaves as far as “*the Sabbath of creation*” is concerned. That is his final conclusion which is formulated with masterful subtlety right from the beginning of *God in Creation*.

But not at the first and casual reading. Perhaps not even at the second reading and the completion of a paper on his views. Only after repeated reminders of one’s own folly, careful reading starts to reveal Moltmann’s actual intentions. For

example,

What it means that “*the Sabbath is the pre-figuration of the world to come*” :– “*The world to come*” is “*the Messianic era*”, the future “*world*” – not the Messiah, not his work and not his Body the Church.

What it means “*when we present creation (“creation” as the “Israel”-“era”) in the light of its future –the glory of God*”? Says Moltmann, “***then we are developing a sabbath doctrine of creation.***” (line 4, p.6. Emphasis Moltmann’s.)

When we talk about the ‘*prospective*’ nature of the Sabbath, we do not allow intrinsic christological or soteriological properties of the Sabbath. ‘*Prospective*’, ‘*pre-figurative*’, is not “prophetic”, is not “messianic”. “*Creation*” and especially its Sabbath, only fore-shadows an “*era*”, another era of “*creation*”, “*yet*”, another “***new creation***” which has an own “*First Day*” of its beginning and duration. “*What this means, factually and practically, is the aspect and prospect of creation which is perceived – on the Sabbath! And only, then!*” says Moltmann, exactly for what is read inside the lines. The reader should not fall into the temptation to read anything “deeper” or “spiritual”, anything eschatological, prophetic, theological, anything for “God’s Word”, in Moltmann’s “*theology of the sabbath*”.

Perhaps one might read something about a “*Spirit*” in Moltmann’s “*theology of the sabbath*”. But not according to orthodox understanding. There is no vertical line crossed. (Barth compared the Sabbath to the vertical line of prayer in his *Evangelical Theology*.) It means “*the light of (creation’s) future –the glory of God*” does not reach out eschatologically, dialectically, theologically or vertically. Only straight forward and hypothetically. Moltmann doesn’t think of history as the realm of God’s self-revelation, merely as “*creation*”. He thinks of “*the glory of God*” as in inverted commas. “*We*” are limited to a “*doctrine of creation*” when dealing with the “*light of creation’s future*” – nothing more. For Moltmann it is matter of an ecological crisis, nothing else. We are stuck with “*Israel’s*” “*history*” and the natural fate of “*the Messianic era*”, not with “*the glory of God*” as “in the face of Jesus”.

I find it impossible to think of “*The Sabbath of Creation*” and of a “*Creation for Glory*” in this way. “*The world to come*” **is not a saved of destruction world, but a saved from destruction world**. This the Sabbath “*prefigures*”. – “Moses parents saw a proper Child when they did hide Moses”, says Hb.11:23; and, “through faith he kept passover and the sprinkling of the blood” – “by faith”, “the blood” of Christ. Creation will never by being saved from the natural disaster facing it become or be transformed into the Kingdom of God. There is another meaning to be saved and that is the meaning the Sabbath carries with itself and in itself, being a pointer to Jesus Christ IN HIS FULNESS OF FULFILMENT IN RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. The Sabbath in the setting of both creation and history is pre-figurative and eschatological in the sense that it is “Israel’s God” acting in Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ, towards Jesus Christ. That means that in its condition of potentiality the Sabbath is identical with its fulfilled realisation – only in Christ and from Christ does it receive its meaning and reality. The historical, horizontal line between Christ’s Lordship of the Sabbath and the Creator’s Lordship of the Sabbath has a direction-arrow that points from the first (“I Am, The Alpha ...”) to the last (“... and the Omega”) – the creation order reversed – from Christ to the Creator. The Sabbath is eschatological. Neither the world to come nor the Sabbath is the completion already. Both point towards completion, but they point towards beginning and end only by virtue of their being pointed at by and from the true Beginning and End and Completion which is the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. That is the Biblical tradition of the Sabbath although not of Christianity and certainly not Moltmann’s. And because it’s not, the Church, ironically, yes, tragically, keeps the First Day of the week instead of the Sabbath the Lord’s Day ... because it is supposed Jesus on the First Day of the week was raised from the dead.

You will find the same enigma scattered throughout the pages of Moltmann's books. Thus here, "*On the Sabbath the creation is completed*". *The creation is not completed in the creation per se* whether *on the Sabbath* or no. Truth is only truth when the full. So, *The creation is completed* **in the fullness and finishing of it**, which is Christ and He, resurrected from the dead, *on the Sabbath*. It must be because of the Sabbath's predestinated glory reflects from the glory that is God's in the face of Jesus. No other day, "*only then*"! (As Moltmann says with words grave of meaning **despite his personal intention** and despite its smallness.) On no other day is creation completed than the day of its completion **in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead**. The whole Bible knows the Seventh Day and no other, for this day.

"*The prospect of creation which is perceived – on the Sabbath*" is not it's being saved from ecological disaster by the efforts of man, but by the rest which God avails in Himself in Jesus Christ for His creation. (Creation regarded in man.) *The prospect of creation* may, well be it, *perceived* in the Sabbath. (And by the Church worshipping, on the Sabbath.) You are an Adventist, and have a better grasp on the *factuality and practicality* "*of the world to come*". But Moltmann neglects **the second coming of Christ** in this first paragraph. (In *Das Kommen Gottes*, Moltmann clearly advocates a **period of transition** into the New Earth and New Heavens while he denies the catastrophic overturn and destruction of the existing world before its new creation – the orthodox Christian view.) He also in this paragraph doesn't properly give attention to **man's sin and depravity** and it's disastrous effect on creation. (Moltmann considers death not the result of sin, for example.)

The Sabbath points to the overcoming and end of evil and sin – as it also points to the beginning of it – **because** it points to Christ. The Sabbath points to redemption from sin; but also points straight at evil and sin. Do you know of any theologian who deals with this problematic? I haven't seen it in SDA theology that only have the Sabbath pointing at "*salvation-rest*" but not at the unrest of judgement. We haven't seen Jesus unless we have seen sin and sinner in hell. I think Christ grasped it in his answer to the Pharisees' interpretation of what sin is, "Have you never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they who were with him?" On a similar occasion Jesus told the good men of the world, "I was an hungered and you gave me no meat". While saying this, Jesus was dealing on the day of judgement, when recompense for sin will be made ... and recompense for labours. The saved see themselves – they see Christ – on the cross dying for their sins. This Sabbath day, He "said to them, The Sabbath was made for man ...", let the Sabbath remind man of his selfish sin and evoke in him a consciousness of judgement day! He who is Lord shall meet you on

Judgement Sabbath in great want and hunger, not to set free, but to send into damnation. I don't find this in Moltmann's beautiful eulogies of the Sabbath. He, on the contrary, would say, "*It is the Sabbath which blesses, sanctifies and reveals the world as God's*" perfect, restful, sinless, "*creation*". This is an unwarranted fantastically peaceful view of the Sabbath. The Sabbath will also reveal the world as not God's creation – as damned. And it does so now and has done so since long ago – since sin entered the heart of man.

The Sabbath is object of God's blessing and sanctification, and thereby itself receives from God's dominion of grace. The Sabbath not only points to grace, but is pointed at by grace – and implies sin! The Sabbath is no indicator of an *apokatastasis* – all will be saved; it is a sign of election: "Here are they that have the Faith of Jesus".

I also do not find in Moltmann's doctrine of the Sabbath more than a doctrine of creation. He sees the Sabbath only as the goal **toward** which creation moves; not **from** which it should **start out** into the world and history.

Yet, maintains Moltmann, "*the First Day is the first day of the new creation*"! What could constitute the difference between a "*Christian creation*" and "*the new creation*"? It is an anomaly if it were to contain difference. *The doctrine of creation* and therefore the doctrine of the Christian Day of Worship, may not be separated from Soteriology, "*the new creation*". Creation-Sabbath should not be dealt with as having no part in God's eternal purpose "as it is **in Christ**". **The scriptures does not allow us fill that creation-need of grace of a Christian Day of Worship – the day of final redemption – with another day.**

To quote Moltmann verbatim, "*Curiously enough, in the theological traditions of the Western churches* (also of the Eastern Church and of the Jewish traditions – the LXX, Gn.1 ending and Gn.2 first verses) *creation is generally presented merely as 'the six days' work'. The Seventh Day, the Sabbath, was often overlooked.* (It in Christian tradition has ever been considered in dismissal.) *Consequently God was presented throughout merely as the creative God: Deus non est otiosus. The resting God, the celebrating God, the God who rejoices over his creation, receded into the background. And yet it is only in his Sabbath rest that the creative God comes to his goal, which means coming to himself and to his glory.*"

The *traditional* conception rests on the idea of rest being the opposite of *non est otiosus* – a moment where God actually ceases to "busy" himself with "wordly affairs" so to speak. But, in fact, God's "rest" is God's most intense "work" ever in time and in the interest of man and a murdered creation. The Sabbath has meaning for creation as

nature – for the “world” – if at all, as **grace**, in that **Jesus’ resurrection** from the dead has meaning for it! Not only man restored and redeemed, but restored and redeemed creation as nature, becomes a possibility and reality **in this work** of rest of God – .... “*only then*”, “*in the Sabbath*”! “***Curiously enough***” then, indeed, “*in the theological traditions creation is generally presented merely as ‘the six days’ work*”! “***Curiously enough***”, indeed, *the Seventh Day, the Sabbath, was often overlooked*”!

“***Curiously enough***”, indeed, **because**,

“*It is only in his Sabbath rest that the creative God comes to his goal, which means coming to himself and to his glory*”!

“*Coming to himself and to his glory*” ... “*only in his Sabbath*”! It can mean only, the Coming God coming to Himself and to His Glory **in Jesus Christ** ... whence the Sabbath! Inevitably, from the nature of the event which is a divine and eschatological act, the act of God in “*Jesus of Nazareth*”, follows, the Sabbath: “*the creative God comes to his goal ... (comes) to Himself*”.

“*The primordial conditions between human beings, and between human beings and nature, are supposed to be restored*”, and that is why “*Israel celebrates the Sabbath in the time and context of her own history*”, and Christians no longer do so because “*according to the Christian view*”, “*through his (Christ’s) resurrection from the dead, the Messianic era which he proclaimed was actually initiated*”.

**The opposite** is seen in Moltmann’s own words, “*Israel celebrates the Sabbath in the time and context of her own history.*” Creation, represented in Israel, “the People of God”, New Testament, Apostolic Israel, *celebrates the Sabbath in the time and context of her own history.* “*But the Sabbath which is repeated (in creation’s time) week by week does not merely interrupt the time for work and the time for living. It points beyond itself to the sabbatical year*” and way beyond that – way beyond creation as nature! – to the time “*in which the primordial conditions between human beings, and between human beings and nature, are supposed to be restored, according to the righteousness of the covenant of Israel’s God.*”

“*According to the righteousness of the covenant of Israel’s God.*” That makes the supposition, “*primordial conditions restored*” no mere thesis, no mere antithesis, but reality, fact, the truth “as it is in Christ”.

“*Israel’s God*” is the same God still, and God’s Israel, the same Israel still. As Paul explained, it was and is the “Spiritual Israel” whose “number is made up” of the “Israel” of both dispensations of the one and eternal Covenant of Grace. And unless one is found written in the book of the names of this Israel, he shall not be saved. “*Israel*” the supposed nation of Moltmann’s dispensationalism, is not the Israel of God. The *history, time and context* of the Israel of **Yahweh**, extends over all

creation, from creation to consummation, and is contained and consummated in the history of the Man of Nazareth, Jesus the Christ. “*Christians*” are **this “Israel”**, or they are not Christians. The Acts of the Apostles made this principle – this “first principle” of the “dominion of Christ” – absolutely clear. And so does Paul. All who will be saved will be the “Israel of God”. (“Principle” ... Col.2:8, “rudiments ... after Christ ... who is the head of all (His) principality and power”). If one is not of the Israel of the Covenant of Grace, he also misses God’s eternal purpose for creation as nature. Universalists may not like the idea. It’s for them to regret; not for me to argue.

Therefore, No! *Israel in the time and context* **not “of her own history”** merely, but Israel in her representative role in the time and conditions of **all** history and of the **whole** creation as nature, *celebrates the Sabbath* as creation as grace! This continuance and passing over of the Sabbath from the Old Testament, “*creation*” and “*Israel*”-Sabbath, into the New Testament and Christian Sabbath, should not be prevented, stopped, or diluted so that the Sabbath simply disappears. Otherwise *Christian tradition* would have been justified in its *negating and overlooking* of the Sabbath.

“God thus spoke concerning the Seventh Day”, “*which is repeated week by week*”, and “*does not merely interrupt the time for work and the time for living*” but itself is designated its place in God’s creation, namely the place of His finishing, blessing, sanctification and resting. “God thus spoke of the Seventh Day” in our present era, which Moltmann identifies as “*The Messianic era*”, and which the preacher to the Hebrew Christians describes as “these last days”. Of the Sabbath God spoke “In the Son”! The Sabbath is designated its place in God’s creation, its place as creation as grace. The Israel of God *celebrates the Sabbath in the time and context of God’s own history* of self-revelation in the saving activity of Jesus the Christ.

I don’t like the translator’s “*human beings*” for Moltmann’s “*der Mensch*” or “*Man*”. “Man”, or even “men”, also transports the connotation of man’s nature. “Man” is not merely a “*human being*”. He is his own nature as well. If one reads “man” instead of “*human beings*” in this quotation (lines 29-32), “*The Sabbath points beyond itself to the sabbatical year, in which the primordial conditions between man; and between man and nature, are supposed to be restored, according to the righteousness of the covenant of Israel’s God*”, then “man” in his essential nature, and nature as creation, are “*restored*” – not merely bodily, not superficially, not merely spread over the globe’s surface – but from its origins to its destiny, **inherently** and as a whole, **all nature as creation**.

Only at this point where creation as man and nature are "restored according to the righteousness of the covenant of Israel's God" does it become possible to catch a glimpse of "the resting God, the celebrating God, the God who rejoices over his creation".

To visualise God "the resting God, the celebrating God, the God who rejoices over his creation", is only possible from the Christian point of view; it starts from the life of the Jesus who became the Christ sweetly anointed in triumph over powers and dominions of the cosmos, the powers and dominions of sin and death which pervade all creation as nature as well as man. (Col.2)

(I am at this moment listening to Beethoven's first violin sonata, the first movement. I can hear a little bit of what that divine rejoicing might have been like. It is no riddle to me why such beautiful music can be found only in Christian civilisation! Says the critic on this composition, "The first movement starts with a big chord (quite characteristic of Beethoven) – in which the violinist is called on for a triple stop – and a brisk motive based on broken triads which defers the main secret for some bars: the main secret emerging as a prominent octave leaps from a semiquaver to a minim followed by a more protracted falling figure which, under later pressure, is to be broken into a kaleidoscope of passage work." The critic tries to portray the joy of the movement from *chord* to *passage work*. How God rejoiced in the accomplishment of His creation when Jesus rose from the dead! *The main secret deferred* – Old Testament / creation; *then emerging as a prominent octave leap* – New Testament / resurrection! (The mystery of the ages, Paul says, now made known; the development within the one movement in the symphony of God's creation. What to me is the more remarkable is the persisting melancholy against which the tone of rejoicing thrives. At last the main secret *is to be broken into a kaleidoscope of passage work*. Can you also imagine Christ's second coming?)

The "true biblical hallmark" of the Sabbath, as **Christian** Sabbath, is the fact that "God ... in the Son ... in these last days ... concerning the Seventh Day spoke: And God the Seventh day did rest". (Hb.1 to 4:1-4) "Factually and practically", "in the light of its future", the Sabbath, "the pre-figuration of the world to come", is **the very** Sabbath in which is perceived "creation in the light of the resurrection". (line 2, p.6) This is axiomatic. The Sabbath could not be exchanged for, or married to, or added to a strange day in which "creation" (that is, man as creation) is not perceived or pre-figured "in the light of the resurrection".

Barth saw "creation" as well as "nature", separately and united, represented in man before its Creator – "man" occupying the responsible position between creation / nature and himself before the Creator. I find this status and duty of man missing in this paragraph of Moltmann. In fact Moltmann rejects the "context of a two-term, dual dogmatics". (See Part 2 of his first paragraph for Moltmann's rejection of the false notion of human "dominion" over nature.) By preferring "a multiple, dialectical and process orientation" for his "doctrine of creation", Moltmann relinquishes the usefulness of the personal encounter perspective, the I – Thou relationship, of "theological tradition". (4<sup>th</sup> Section, p. 7)

Sometimes, quite often in fact, it seems Moltmann would have preferred the Church had kept both the Sabbath and the First Day alike like during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. He never articulates the idea, but supplies ample reason to suspect he so feels. His every thought on the Sabbath and the First Day is *curious enough* – indeed it is so enigmatic it is frightening. A good professor of New Testament told me the other day that he for all practical purposes stopped studying Moltmann. I could not understand his reasons because he mumbled so. I have never before heard him mumble. The only word I could clearly distinguish was "wrong". I sometimes find it very easy, sometimes about impossible to prove Moltmann "wrong"! I really enjoy reading him. And I don't want to prove him "wrong". There's no point in it. But I would like to see many ideas more conclusively developed and more understandable and frank, whether acceptable to popular taste or not. For example, line 16 - 20, p. 6,

"And yet it is only the Sabbath (Mark, Moltmann speaks of "the seventh day") which completes and crowns creation". This crowning day of course receives its crown from what Moltmann has just described as "The resting God, the celebrating God, the God who rejoices over his creation". God's *crowning* act, his "goal" – the act that crowns Him as well as the Sabbath day – is *Jesus of Nazareth's* resurrection from the Nazareth ("Secluded Acres") of the dead! (Even Jesus' earthly name is prophetic. In it is already hidden the end-purpose of His life.)

"And yet it is only the Sabbath which completes and crowns creation. It is only in his Sabbath rest that the creative God comes to his goal". (p. 6, lines 20-21) We have seen this can only mean God acting in Christ in his grace and mercy. Then "that is why", as Moltmann says a few lines further (bottom of p. 6, line 39), "Christians celebrate the First Day of the week as the feast of the resurrection". He himself *overlooks* the Seventh Day of the week and makes of the First Day instead, "the First Day of the New Creation". The first day of the **completed**, "**finished**" creation from its very creation and nature and history, is "the Seventh Day" of the week of creation. That is the truth and reality and

order of the creation saga and of the whole story of Passover-redemption – of the **whole** Bible. It also is the truth and reality and order of the Everlasting Covenant and of the New Dispensation of that single unity God's Eternal Covenant. This day is the day in man's (creation's) time which God made his time. This day is the day in God's time. (Barth) This day is the day of the turning of the Yom Yahweh. (Schilder). This day is the day "prospectively" etc. as Moltmann describes and defines "the Seventh Day of the week", which completes the New Creation, is its "crown" and culmination etc. But no, the First Day it turns out to be?

Moltmann does not understand "The resting God, the celebrating God, the God who rejoices over his creation" as the God who also and in principle, first, *rests, celebrates, and rejoices over his RECREATED OR "FINISHED" creation* in the ultimate sense of *crowning and completion* – which is Victory, and which in Jesus Christ is Victory over the totally inclusive and sweeping negation of God's creation – THE Victory "from the dead"! This Victory also is the Victory over the negation of God's Sabbath, and is the confirmation, the divine confirmation, of this day of God's creation, the Seventh Day of the week.

Moltmann contradicts himself!

Then again, Moltmann does not contradict himself. Moltmann unjustifiably separates "creation" as history and "the Messianic era" as though "the Messianic era" also and no longer is "creation" and "history", but is supra-creation and super-history. His distinction becomes obvious in the following way on page 6, third paragraph,

"Israel celebrates the Sabbath in the time and context of her own history. But the Sabbath which is repeated week by week does not merely interrupt the time for work and the time for living. It points beyond itself to the sabbatical year, in which the primordial conditions between men, and between man and nature, are supposed to be restored, according to the righteousness of the covenant of Israel's God. And this sabbatical year, in its turn, points in history beyond itself to the future of the messianic era. Every Sabbath is a sacred anticipation of the world's redemption. It was with the proclamation of the messianic Sabbath that the public ministry of Jesus of Nazareth began (Luke 4:18ff.) Through his giving of himself to death on the cross, and through his resurrection from the dead, the messianic era which he proclaimed was actually initiated, according to the Christian view. That is why Christians celebrate the first day of the week as the feast of the resurrection: it is the first day of the new creation. They (Christians) are therefor perceiving creation in the light of the resurrection and discerning reality in the light of its new creation."

If ever an anti-climax!

In this ingenious way Moltmann says nothing new or different from the traditional negations of the Seventh Day Sabbath of "Israel" (or the "Jews") and nothing new or different from the traditional affirmations of the First Day of the week as the Christian Day of Worship. Because he does not really and honestly **can** mean what he says when he says, "They (Christians) are therefor perceiving creation in the light of the resurrection and discerning reality ( the world and its history) in the light of its new creation." It – "creation", and "reality", in the context of Moltmann's concern here, is the Seventh and Sabbath Day in its history of God's creating. It is the Seventh Day Sabbath of the creation (and of the Law) that is "perceiv(ed) in the light of the resurrection and discern(ed) in the light of its new creation" – its New Creation in and through Jesus Christ ... in resurrection from the dead!

But then it is the Sunday that greets the pilgrim?

Moltmann at the same time **contradicts** every and the whole of all his **own** arguments about "God in Creation" and "The Sabbath of Creation". Up to the crucifixion of Jesus it is all "history", the "anticipating" history of the straight and horizontal plane from creation to the day of Jesus' crucifixion in which every event is one of "proclamation", even Jesus own earthly ministry. The God of this period is God as "Israel's God", "the creative God" of an earthly reality and history which Moltmann calls "creation". The "righteousness" of this period "accords" with the "covenant" between Israel's God" and Israel the people "of her own" "time and context" and "of her own" "history". Moltmann's is just the best of all attempts not to put it so bluntly that it is "all Jewish", all "Old Testament". This, which is "history" and "the creation" "in anticipation", stops, dead, when Jesus dies. "The new creation" starts with **its**, "**own**", "First Day" – the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead (**allegedly the First Day of the week**). Which is all, the upsetting, the annihilation, of what was "creation as history", or "Israel's", or "primordial" or whatever nice words Moltmann pulls out of the hat for the first phase of God's One and Eternal Covenant of Grace.

Moltmann, I dare to say, emphasises his designed misleading in this, "For in the Sabbath quiet it is God's creation that they" ("people" who "celebrate the Sabbath") are permitting the world to be." There's nothing laissez faire about God's Rest of the Sabbath or about his People's. How could it possibly be, seeing, "When people celebrate the Sabbath, they perceive the world as God's creation"? To be "God's creation", it is impossible to be "quiet". "Quiet" cannot be "God, the celebrating God, the God who rejoices over his creation"! No, it is quiet



in hell. God doesn't hear people's screams there. But in his celebrating and rejoicing is heard and proclaimed, **God's** rest; is seen **His** being raised up high. The trumpet shall sound. Says Peter, "Wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, in the presence of that great and notable day of the Lord". (Acts 2:19-20) This happened on the Sabbath of Sinai-Pentecost. It happened the very Sabbath of Israel's Passing Through the Red Sea. It happened the Sabbath in Jerusalem Below on the Great Day of Pentecost. It happened the very Sabbath Day of Jesus' Passing Through the gate from hell and death into eternal life.

No, not in "*quiet*", but in *God's Sabbath celebration and rejoicing it is He that is permitting the world to be His creation* – permitting it to rest in that reality that it is His – for ever! "*God's Sabbath celebration and rejoicing*" is "*the completion of creation through the peace of the Sabbath, distinguishing ... the world as ... the world as God's own and NEW creation*". (lines 8, 9, 13, p. 6.) Nothing of this is real, or true, or comfort, or hope, or faith – nothing – **if about the Sabbath of the Seventh Day** it is not real, not true, not comfort, not hope, not faith in Jesus resurrected from the dead!

And it is God distinguishing his People – "Israel" – as His **New** Creation. It is God who fills and fulfils the Sabbath Day. God's activity did. Now "*why*" do "*Christians celebrate the First Day of the week*", seeing the **Sabbath** is the first day of God's finished, that is, redeemed, renewed creation? To step out from the First Day of the week into one's own weeks, instead of from God's Sabbath rest for man, is to fall out, emaciated, into the void of one's own exhaustion and extinction.

*"The completion of creation through the peace of the Sabbath"*

I enjoy Moltmann's use of the word "peace" here instead of the more literal "rest" of the text. It is an interchange of great value to appreciating the deep and dignified meaning of the Sabbath Day. It constitutes subject matter worth an investigation in its own right. I once just perused the related instances of Scripture but hesitated at the immensity of the challenge.

*"The peace of the Sabbath"*. What can it be but the peace Christ has earned and, gives. The Sabbath neither is nor generates the peace of God's rest. It is a vehicle for transferring Christ's peace to those who worship Him. Peace is Christ's. Christ is the peace, the peace of His Kingdom and rule. The creation must in the same way the Christian is bequeathed the peace of Christ receive it or could clamour after it in vain. The Sabbath as well. The Sabbath shares the only true peace Christ Jesus has to offer, or must forfeit peace. Only God cannot part with peace; the Sabbath may. General acceptance of God's peace of redemption – or for

that matter of God's Sabbath peace – will not be witnessed during the present time and condition of the Kingdom of God on earth – during the "*Messianic era*". Moltmann dreams of it, but not until Christ returns shall creation stop sighing. Creation must wait till Christ returns for its redemption and recreation as creation. The Sabbath cannot serve to this end. It wasn't meant to. Paul makes this clear in 1Corinthians 15. Christ's Body has received recreation and eternal life in Jesus already. An absolute dichotomy exists between that which is His and which is estranged. Moltmann (in this paragraph) cannot find quiescence in the fact. Nevertheless creation must in the Body which is Christ's, partake of God's Sabbath peace. Only in so far as Christ rules, real peace rules. The repair of nature only takes place in believers; its destruction outside shall continue as long as sin exists. *The peace of the Sabbath distinguishes the view of the world as NEW creation from the view of the world as created nature. It indicates the spiritual yet earthly realm of Christ's reign.* The Sabbath exclusively indicates this difference where creation exists as God's elect. It distinguishes the view of the world as creation or nature from the view of the world as Christ's Body. The Ecclesia is the Spirit's presence in the world; not nature; and the Sabbath is its sign – not the First Day. ("In the world, but not of the world.") Christ's presence in the Sabbath is eschatological yet cosmic. The Sabbath promises judgement. Then will nature be revealed as creation – as God's creation. Presently already, "*The Sabbath is the true hallmark of every biblical ... also every Christian – doctrine of creation.*" It, in the accompaniment of the Body of Believers, points to the coming *peace* and *restoration* in the world of unrest and destruction. Moltmann exactly in not distinguishing the "*dual structure*" of the fallen reality of creation, raises in his reader the awareness of the acute need of such a perception for understanding the doctrine of creation properly.

Moltmann's assertion, "*The true hallmark of every biblical ... also every Christian doctrine of creation ... is the Sabbath*", is courageous, nevertheless wanting. I would say the true hallmark of the doctrine of creation is its eschatological authenticity, and that that hallmark should also certify the true Sabbath. Jesus in His accomplishment of God's works in resurrection from the dead hallmarks the Sabbath and *also every biblical, every Christian, doctrine of creation*. The price tagged to the Sabbath, "at the cost of discipleship" is reckoned on its production cost Jesus it's Lord in Victory. The price tag shows where the Sabbath was manufactured and by whom. The Sabbath firstly belongs under the theological disciplines of Christology and Soteriology before it may be headed under the doctrine of creation. I have said the same thing in my previous writing to you. It's because of his theological orientation of the Sabbath that Barth maintains better insights into the Sabbath question

than Moltmann who only seemingly makes much more of the Sabbath.

*“When we present creation **in the light of its future – ‘the glory of God’ ... then we are developing a Sabbath doctrine of creation.**”*

*‘The glory of **God**, “shines in the face of **Jesus Christ**”,* 2Cor.4:4,6. The glory of Jesus Christ shines in His resurrection from the dead. In His resurrection Jesus won His Title: Lord and King, Victor and Ruler. The Day of his resurrection by virtue of this, is “The Lord’s Day” (*kyriakeh hehmera*). This Day is the Lord’s in the Covenant of His Grace, already pre-figured in “The Supper of the Lord” (*kyriakos deipnon*). His Lordship before this Day of Yahweh, still depended on, and in hope awaited, resurrection from the dead. It is said in Hebrews Christ “offered up prayers” – He hoped. But after his resurrection, “being made perfect” Christ no longer hopes; He has achieved; “He has become the Author of eternal salvation”. Hb.5:7,9. He now is called not only Jesus, but Jesus Christ. Christ NOW is at peace; He **has** “entered into his own rest, **as God**, from His own labours”. Hb.4:10. What glorious Scripture! How is the glory of God portrayed in the face of Jesus! The Sabbath Day meanwhile attentive, at duty, serves and honours this glory which is Christ’s. For no other reason than the glory of God is the Sabbath Day called His holy. (Is.58:13) On no other grounds is it entitled to be titled, Lord’s Day. But to rob the Sabbath of this grounds and future and to give it to the First Day of the week instead, is man’s unthinkable act of self-righteousness. Man loses, nature is deprived, God is dishonoured – and Scripture is manhandled!

The Gospel of Jesus must be a stumbling block. It is the Sabbath’s purpose to lead men up against that Stumbling Block, week after week after week. Every Sabbath Day man by the redemption Jesus brings, must rise up again on the other side of that stumbling block, yea, from underneath it, crushed, yet revived and recreated and refreshed to confront his days of labour. “We have this treasure (of God’s glory in the face of Jesus) in earthen (corruptible, mortal) vessels, that the excellency of the power (that overcomes our earthen corruptibility) may be of God, and not of us.”

Now see that excellency Christ excelled in, namely “what is the exceeding greatness of God’s power. It is the excellency according to the working of His mighty power to us-ward who believe. It is the excellency which God wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at his own Right Hand in heavenly realms – far above all principality and power and might and dominion, above every name mentioned not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. It is the greatness of that power by which God has put all creation under Christ’s feet, and has given Him to be the Head over all creation ... to the Church which is His Body. God gave Him, to be the Head, the fullness of

God that fills all in all.” (My adaptation.)

Now for Moltmann’s last paragraph of this section (3) on p. 7.

*“The light of the resurrection is a light that fills even times past and the dead with hope for their coming redemption. The light of Christ’s resurrection is the light of the Christian Sabbath. But it is more than that. It shines as messianic light on the whole sighing creation, giving it, in its transience, an eternal hope that it will be created anew as the ‘world without end.’”*

I can only ask, How is it possible for Moltmann to say this about the First Day of the week? Just in the light of his own arguments about the Sabbath “of creation” it is unthinkable that he attributes all these virtues to another day than the Seventh of the week, God’s “**holy**” – “**destined for glory**” – day?

The most unfortunate and misleading mistake Moltmann falls prey to himself, is that he even divides Christ’s own “history” into separate and contradicting “histories” or dispensations – he tears the Messiah apart into a Jesus of Nazareth and a Christ, both of strange loyalties. No, the Jesus the Word of God born in the flesh in Bethlehem is the Word of God incarnate in resurrection from the dead. What He made of the Sabbath before his death and resurrection, He made of it in his death and resurrection. And What Christ Jesus made of the Sabbath in resurrection from the dead is word for word and act for act what He, the Word of God, made of it in creation as being God’s New Creation.

If you remember anything of what I said on that Sabbath Conference last year about this time, I’m sure it will be these words: “IT MUST BE THE SABBATH”. It must be the Sabbath for being Christ’s Day of resurrection from the dead; It must be the Sabbath for prophecy being the Word of God; It must be the Sabbath for creation being prefiguration of the world to come. And so I could go on until every given truth and fact concerning the Sabbath of the Lord your God had been given: “IT MUST BE THE SABBATH DAY, the Seventh Day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead Christ the Lord”. And then of course it must follow, that, “technically”, (as I call it) the Scriptures’ chronology of days and dates and times of actual, true and real events of our Passover Lamb’s dying and resurrection, will confirm in greater and in smallest detail the fact that IT MUST BE THE SABBATH DAY!

## 7.7.1.3.

**The Sabbath Based on Both Scriptural Chronology  
And Christological Content**

*If one wishes to justify Sabbath worship, one must find an independent theological basis for doing so, for merely the Law could not justify celebrating the Sabbath as **Christian** worship. You will recognise lines 2 to 4 of your Paper, p. 2. You will also recognise the changes I made. Have a look at lines 6 to 8 of your first page, “On the one hand there is what might be called the problem of the “chronology of the Sabbath” ... On the other hand there is the question of the “theology of the Sabbath””. The problem for your proposal is that the two aspects are aspects of the one problem. A “theological basis” cannot be “independent” in the sense that it could do without the “historical and textual consideration” (p. 2, ln. 13). Neither can the “historical and textual consideration alone ... be sufficient”. “The only way to decide between the two practices” of “Sunday keeping” and its only “alternative”, Sabbath keeping, “would be to rely on” **both** the “theological appraisal” and the “chronological” or “historical and textual considerations”.*

The crux of the matter lies in the **inter-dependence** of these axioms; and its essence in the contest over the one and only “theological basis”. For there is no other but the epoch-making event of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead which is the only true epoch-making event of history. The Sabbath, **like** the First Day, must rely on this event if it must rely on a “theological basis” – there is no other; not if it must be a Christian basis; not if it must be a basis of Faith.

Traditional Sabbath Day doctrine has rested on the taking for granted that Jesus’ resurrection is not a “historical and textual consideration” – not to speak of a “chronological” –*consideration!* Herein the Sabbath Day Tradition is mistaken. If ever there has been a “Scriptural”, that is, a “historical and textual” as well as “chronological” “consideration” for the Church’s observance of the Sabbath, it is the resurrection of Christ from the dead! It must be for there is no other. For wasn’t its exodus from Egypt and its entering into the promised land exactly the reason why Israel observed the Seventh Day? In fact it wasn’t exactly the reason or exactly of the same significance, for Jesus’ entering into His own rest was that much more sublime, that much more divine, that much more victorious – **that much more reason** for its sanctification, for its blessing, its finishing and rest – for the observance and keeping of the day of its event in the divine rhythm of time for the life of his Body the Church of Christ.

Herein lies the “first principle” of the “dominion” of Christ: that Jacob the last born is the Chosen above the first born Esau. (The ‘honour’

of light’s creation is divided between two days; that of God’s Rest belongs to one.) The Gospel came last, but is before Moses. Our Passover Lamb fulfils the Passover ere the blood of lambs and goats do. We should say this in the past tense also, for Christ is the First Born of the Elect, and not Abraham; and the First born of creation, and not Adam; the First Born of God, and not the “Spirit”. The Seventh Day is the first day of God’s “**finished**” creation, and not the First Day of the week. “Scriptures”, that is, “doctrine”, cannot be cut /off from its Wellspring, “Theology”. And “theology” as doctrine, cannot be cut off from the Scriptures as the Word of God or it becomes the laughingstock of philosophy and science.

Traditional Sunday doctrine for the very reason of the Sabbath doctrine’s beggary, its aridity – as Ellen White said, for its Law upon Law as dry as the hills of Gilboa – triumphed. It triumphed holding high that seemed the laurels of Christ ... while Christ’s, were woven of the foliage of the Sabbath tree!

Sunday doctrine today stands exposed in its stark reality: It is a lie and a liar; it makes a lie of the Only Truth of Gods Word. “Sunday worship” – making Christian doctrine and Christian action of the First Day and its observance – is taking the Name of the Lord in vain. Being a despiser of one Commandment it is the despiser of every Commandment of the Law. And have you not seen how sardonic its defence builds on nothing but the trampling underfoot of God’s holy Law? It – Sunday doctrine – is the party that is obsessed with the Law – not Sabbath doctrine – because it is constantly haunted by the Law. Every beautiful piece of theology in the name of Sunday is an attempt to flee the wrath of God’s Law.

**I say this if**, Christ rose from the dead “in **Sabbath’s** time” (Mt.28:1). If not, and Christ “on the First Day of the week” rose from the dead, THEN I say this NOT. For then Christ made void the Law. The “Law” then, is not only, as Paul says, “retired”, but overturned. Then every Commandment of the Law is turned against itself in that it is turned against the One it points to and “brings unto”; it is turned against Christ and Law becomes anti-Christ.

And I stand shamed.

If Christ “on the First Day of the week” rose from the dead, **then** to keep the **Sabbath** because the Law says I must keep it, is to curse Christ and to keep Sabbath in absolute solidarity with Judaism. *If one wishes to justify Sabbath worship, one must find an independent theological basis for doing so, for merely the Law could not justify celebrating the Sabbath as **Christian** worship.*

I am justified, in fact I am forced then, to conclude that the “chronological” question of the Sabbath Day – Which day of the week is it? – first rests solidly on its “theological basis”. The “historic” and

“*textual*” basis serves the theological; *vice versa* also, yes, but not primarily; only secondarily.

I hope I make myself clear. My views are so radically different – directly opposite – the traditional, whether that of Sunday tradition or that of Sabbath tradition. What it comes down to is that I only want to grant the Sabbath what is rightfully the Sabbath’s evangelically, and grant Sunday what is rightfully Sunday’s Scripturally – which is nothing like the Lord’s Day – which is **claimed** belongs to it, but in fact belongs to the Sabbath Day. Day of God’s finishing all his works he had made ... all ... in Christ, is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. “God thus (in Jesus Christ) concerning the Seventh Day spoke” ... “in these last days” of the “*Messianic era*”! God thus of the Seventh Day spoke BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD OF JESUS CHRIST: NO OTHER “THEOLOGICAL BASIS” for the “*Christian Sabbath*”! Ecology is not theology; sociology is not theology, economics is not, politics is not. This is “theology”, the knowledge and applying of the knowledge of **God**: “Let creation in her groans and travails cease”. Why? Because we have made it, we have discovered “*the first day of the new creation*”? **No!** “Let creation in her groans and travails cease: ... Christ is coming!” We have discovered the last day of God’s New Creation “*in the fullness of time*” (Paul), “*in the turn of the vom Yahweh*”, (Schilder); in “*The Christological-Ethical Turn*” (with reference to Barth) of “*The rediscovery of (God’s) Sabbath*” (Webster). That rediscovery is a treasure box opened and discovered empty if not from it is lifted high before the eyes of men Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead. The Sabbath finds its reason d’être in Jesus’ resurrection; Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the “*theological basis*” of the Sabbath and for its doctrine and its keeping.

If Jürgen Moltmann had done the same, I would have been exited about his “*theology of the Sabbath*” in *God in Creation*. But he doesn’t – and I can see he doesn’t, and why not. I believe you also see. I believe you also see how Moltmann just re-iterates the thrust of every and all traditional theologians – maybe just more clever and less personally offensive. But the more effective.

It is Sabbath now and let’s stop working and start celebrating God’s Sabbath ... in Christ! In Christ in resurrection from the dead ... our domain, had it not been for his election.

Professor Webster,

You have posed the challenge, “*That if one wishes to justify Sunday worship, one must find an independent theological basis for doing so, for it cannot be merely another day for celebrating the Sabbath*”. For saying this you have made three presuppositions, 1. That Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is **insufficient** to provide “*theological*

*basis*” for “worship” on the day of the week of His resurrection. 2. That “*the polemical tone ...*” and “*... earlier discussions*” that “*typified*” “*Sabbath worship*” as well as “*Sunday worship*”, fall short of serving as “*theological basis*” for either of the *alternatives*; 3. That the Sabbath must and does have the necessary “*theological basis*” for Christian appropriation of the Day for the purpose of worship. Only its “*theological basis*” has not properly been identified and formulated as yet. The larger aim of your lecture is to show how Jürgen Moltmann provides useful if not the *alternative* “*theological basis*” which the Sabbath and its observance have long been waiting for. The implication of course is the *polemical historic* and *textual perceptions* or *dimensions* cannot do for a *basis*.

Now if Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is **sufficient** to provide “*theological basis*” for “worship” on the day of the week of His resurrection, and if He in fact did rise from the dead on the **First** Day of the week, then the First Day would **not be merely another day for celebrating the Sabbath**. And if, by the same principle, it is true that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is **sufficient** to provide the required “*theological basis*”, then, if the **Sabbath** – and not the First Day – in fact is the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, then **it** – and not the First Day – should be the day of *worship* and *celebrating* Christian Redemption and the *New Creation*.

I ask, is “*the central role the Sabbath plays in Moltmann’s ecological oriented doctrine of creation*” truly theological? On p. 7 where you start your appreciation of Moltmann’s theology of the Sabbath, your first quote from *GC* is from page 277, Chapter 11, “*The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation*”. I could not trace any quotation from Section 5 of this Chapter, “*Jesus and the Sabbath*”, p. 290 and further.

Most obviously and constantly in *GC* the reader is reminded of the Sabbath’s comparative restrictions, even in the context of your quotation from p. 277. And that brings one to the (in my opinion) most important statement in *God in Creation* as far as the Sabbath is concerned, “*We shall now look at the individual elements of the Sabbath as the Jewish understanding of God’s revelation comprehends them, and shall then use these points of departure from which to work out the messianic elements of the Sabbath which emerge from the Christian understanding of God’s revelation. For it is from this, ultimately, that the long-neglected problem about the connection between Sunday and the Sabbath arises*”.

Whenever Moltmann speaks of the Sabbath – in terms of whatever “*messianic*” statement – he speaks of it as in essence *Jewish* and “*creation*”. Only afterwards – “*ultimately*” – does he apply the conclusions reached from the *Jewish Sabbath*, to “*the Christian understanding of God’s revelation*” as they apply to **Sunday**. “*Sunday:*

*The Feast of the **Beginning***” – in contradistinction to the “*The Sabbath: The Feast of **Creation***”.

Moltmann diverges not a hair’s breadth from “traditional” Sunday-apologetics. He not for a moment does more than a comparative investigation into the two opposing and exclusive principles of Sabbath doctrine and -keeping and Sunday doctrine and -keeping. His principle of departure is erroneous: From the nature of the case a **naturally would arise** when the **messianic elements of the Sabbath** which emerge from the **Christian** understanding of God’s revelation are applied to the **First Day** of the week. For Moltmann the only thing enigmatic is that the non-existent connection *between Sunday and the Sabbath* has for so long been *neglected*. Moltmann’s is but the hackneyed assumption – beforehand and without foundation – of the *historical and textual chronology* of the events of “*God’s revelation*” in Jesus Christ in dying and rising from the dead “*on the First Day of the week*”. Could it but have been considered that possibly, yes, actually, indeed by exigency, Christ rose from the dead “the third day according to the Scriptures (of Passover-chronology)” “in Sabbath’s time”! I assume then Moltmann wouldn’t have written a word about the Sabbath. Or he would have been a Sabbatharian, that is, a person who keeps the Sabbath for being the Lord Jesus Christ’s Day of Worship-Rest.

#### 7.7.1.4.1.

##### **A Begging of the Question**

At this point I would like to take a detour from Moltmann’s theology to discovering a **theological** motive and basis for the Sabbath and its keeping **as Christians**.

I have just received Prof. Bacchiocchi’s *End-Time Issue 79: An Open Letter to Dr. James Kennedy*. I shall use this *Letter* of his because it is recent, concise and actual conversation. And because it is distributed among many thousands of readers.

Our problem is a **theological basis** for the Sabbath, a basis for its doctrine and for its keeping or rather its celebration – a theological basis strong enough to bear all three aspects of the question which Moltmann in *GC* approaches from a purely “*doctrine of creation*” point of view. As far as I understand yours, it is an eschatological perspective of the Sabbath as the Day of the Coming God. I don’t want to say more on your view than what I have already said, now. I would like to discuss **Prof. Bacchiocchi’s objections** to my proposal that our theological basis for the Sabbath should be found in **Jesus’ resurrection** from the dead. Now Bacchiocchi in this *Letter* referred to, answers Dr. Kennedy who assumes Jesus’ resurrection as the theological basis for “*Sunday worship*” as we would speak in short. Bacchiocchi answers Kennedy word for word as he

eight years ago answered me in your presence ... as if I were speaking of Sunday!

Protests Bacchiocchi – (let us forget the “day” involved is Sunday) – “*Numerous ... scholars concur ... in attributing to Christ’s Resurrection ... the fundamental reason for the choice of ... day by the Apostolic church. In spite (of this) ... the alleged role of the Resurrection in the adoption of (the day’s) observance, lacks biblical support. A careful study of all the references to the Resurrection reveals the incomparable importance of the event, but it does not provide any indication regarding a special day to commemorate it. In fact, as Harold Riesenfeld notes, “In the accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels, there are no sayings which direct that the great event of Christ’s Resurrection should be commemorated on the particular day of the week on which it occurred.”*” (Emphasis CGE)

The Gospel is not the Law, and in taking this as fact, Moltmann is perfectly right. “*The new creation*” isn’t “*creation*” – to say the same thing in his words. Then how could one search for **Law in the Gospel** to explain its own “principles” – the word Paul uses for the laws of Christ’s “Dominion” in Colossians 2? “The Kingdom – that is, the Authority, the Law – is with / in you”, said Christ; “The Kingdom is among you” ... You are the Church, you are the Kingdom that lives by the rules of the Kingdom. The Christian Church immediately, without the waiting of one day after its creation, lived by the rules of Christ’s Kingdom. It experienced, existentially the very Life of the Body that is Christ’s. Just as at creation the world did not take millions of years before it lived by law of its Life which is God, so the new earth and the new heavens the prophets saw afar off at its creation. One does not need to search to find Christ’s life in the life of his Body the Church. There it is for every member and the whole of the Body to share, to celebrate, to keep : Christ resurrected the Author and the Finisher of the Faith of Israel, of her prophets, but also of her fishermen and tax collectors.

“This is the Day the Lord has made – let us rejoice in it”! “It was Sabbath’s time”, the Apostolic Church learned from the women who learned from the angel, “early on the First Day of the week”, by the pen of another “Evangelist”. **Four Gospels** almost pre-occupied with the “question” and quest of the Sabbath’s true meaning, nature, and origin, and yet there is no “*indication regarding a special day to commemorate it is provided*”? The *indication regarding the special day to commemorate it* is *provided* in and by and through its event as such, Jesus’ resurrection! The **Sabbath’s involvement** was no accidental involvement, but a predestined involvement according to God’s “appointment”, “according to the Scriptures the third day” of the implied *Institution of Scriptures*, “the Passover”. This is the Day the Lord has made – **let us recognise it**

**when we see it and rejoice!** Bacchiocchi's is the weakest possible objection to **the presence and validity** in the very life of the Apostolic Church **which is** the **Resurrection Life** of Christ from the dead. From it **appears in new creation** – in original creation – God's Sabbath Day! (Whence comest thou, Gehazi Sun's day? I cannot answer on irrelevancies.)

*The role of the **Resurrection** in the adoption of the **Sabbath Day's observance** is not "alleged"; it "lacks" not "biblical support" but directly contributed to the Sabbath's origin as no other reality in the Sitz im Leben of the Apostolic Church did.*

The Sabbath far more often than what it is **mentioned**, is **presupposed** in the Gospels and New Testament in toto. It is not merely taken for granted – but is assumed as the prerequisite of the Church's being and existence. In every instance of **communal action** whether the primary response to the Gospel's call, congregation, or its resultant disciplines of preaching and prayer, holy communion or baptism, the Sabbath is pre-supposed and is **as real and present** as in the instances of its mention.

(What blindness could say, "... you will search the New Testament in vain for one instance where the New Testament Christians worshipped on the old Jewish Sabbath" (meaning the Seventh Day of the week)? (Ashland Ave. Tabernacle Baptist Church Tract C415) *The New Testament Christians in fact worshipped on the old Jewish Sabbath **Day** but they never celebrated or kept "the old Jewish Sabbath".*)

**Then:** never in the New Testament is the **Sabbath**- congregation of believers noticed but as the congregation of **those who believe in the resurrection from the dead of Jesus the Lord**. Nowhere, as nowhere will the Church be noticed as being the congregating, the praying, the preaching, without the **Day of its doing** so, the Sabbath. **But**, the Church – while being the body of believers who "remembered the Sabbath Day" – remembered it for **this**: "**I, finished** the work Thou (before the foundation of the world) hast given me to do". **How? In resurrection! When? In the Day** that God finished!

The Sabbath – its rest as well as day – meant so much to this Church it with great effort, and many years after Jesus' death and resurrection, incorporated it into its sacred writings that in fact have nothing to tell but the **Resurrection** of its Lord! "For God ... in these last days ... in the Son ... concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke: And God the Seventh Day rested from all his works He had made". "Therefore, do not neglect your assemblies!" "Therefore!" –(ara) There remains for the People of God their keeping of the Sabbath". On what foundation? : "For **He-who-has-entered-into-his-rest**, rests from his own works as does God from his!" "... As does God, from his!" There's no other Day as

there is no other reason – **Jesus**, entering into the rest from his own labours, is Jesus through Victory Lord of the Sabbath . Not in the Scriptures is another day or reason to be found!

"God included **all under sin** in order to be merciful to all", says Paul. It means God includes all men under the **Law** in order to save them. In Acts the first and unequivocal condition for any person to receive forgiveness of sin and the life the Gospel promises, was to become a Jew first. That meant to become a sinner and lost first in order to be saved. Only through Israel was salvation possible. Only for the sick is the Healer come. I nowhere find an exception to this non-negotiable. If a man must be saved under mercy he must needs first be brought under the law and condemnation. "I haven't come for the well, but for the sick". It is impossible that the **Sabbath** could not have been the very life-centre of such a "Jewish" Community of the saints. But wait! This community was built upon the **single** fact and truth of **Jesus' resurrection** from the dead.

Not for once can a dichotomy between the Church's **basic** Faith – **Resurrection** Faith – and the **basic** requirement for the very existence of it in time and space, the **Sabbath Day**, be traced. Yet it is assumed there is "no connection" between Jesus' resurrection and the special Day of Worship?! It is the cause of utmost sadness that the **Sabbath's fundamental reason** for existence is denied the **Christian** Sabbath Day. And that its privilege and prerogative – Jesus' resurrection – should have been allowed another day of the week ... well that is only laughable because it can never be more than man's presumptuousness. Both to **deny** the Sabbath its **only** honour – its Lord's exaltation in resurrection – and to allow the First Day to **hijack** the Sabbath's honour, are actions that **provoke** God.

God's Sabbath is good enough for wonders and healings, but not good enough for the wonder and healing of all wonders and healings?! It is the wonder and healing of the New Creation; it is the finishing and completion of God in total and utter omnipotence and omnipresence in lifting Christ high above every name that is named ... "in Sabbath's time"!

That is a lamentable opinion of God's Sabbath Day that can do without the resurrection of its Lord and that can sell the birth right of the first born for a jug of bean soup!

It is true "The alleged role of the resurrection in the adoption of **Sunday observance lacks biblical support**", but it is not true that the resurrection "does not provide any indication regarding a special day to commemorate it", for that special day is the Lord's Day – the Sabbath. "In fact", *In the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus – the Gospels, there are **many** sayings which direct that the great event of Christ's Resurrection should be commemorated on **the particular day** of the week*

on which it occurred ... many! Many direct and indirect. “*In fact*”, every and all of Jesus’ “*Sabbath ministry*” sayings and deeds direct the attention and the Christian expectation towards that great day of that great event in the turning of the Yom Yahweh, of which Jesus on the cross spoke when he uttered the word of creation, “It is finished”!

“*Moreover*”, “*The first day of the week, in the writings of the New Testament, is never called ‘Day of the Resurrection’*”. But of the **Sabbath**, is it said in Matthew 28 the first verse, that “in (its) end, after its noon, before the First Day of the week, when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set off to go have a look at the grave – then, suddenly – there was a big earthquake, and an angel descended from the heaven ...” – **for the Resurrection of Jesus then occurred**. It is not said of the First Day, but of the Seventh (Genitive): “In Sabbath’s time ...”. *Therefor to say that the Sabbath was observed because Jesus rose on that day*, is as pure and simple Gospel truth as it is pure and simple Greek.

It certainly is **not** “a *petitio principii*” – being the Sabbath Day spoken of – the Seventh Day **of the week**. For such a celebration as the Sabbath’s, **cannot** “*be monthly or annually*” or even daily “*and still be an observance of that particular day*”, the day of Jesus’ resurrection. The Sabbath it must be.

Bacchiocchi reaches the most irresponsible conclusion I could find in his Five Books on the Sabbath, “*The New Testament attributes no liturgical significance to the Day of Christ’s Resurrection ...*”. Here is a *begging of the question* if ever there was, for Bacchiocchi continues, “*... simply because the Resurrection was seen as an existential reality experienced by living victoriously by the power of the Risen Saviour*”! **How is it thinkable that exactly this does not constitute the theological basis of every action and principle of the Church? How is it thinkable it is “not a liturgical practice associated with worship” of the Risen Christ?!**

It is possible to negate, only, if the meaning of the Resurrection doesn’t have meaning for the **Church** as corporate Body of Christ, but has meaning only for persons as individuals. In other words, it is possible to negate, only if Jesus’ resurrection does not directly and exclusively apply to the Elect – the Ecclesia, but to the profane public as well. It implies a worthless Sabbath, a non-entity, an impossibility, for **there is no such thing as a God’s Sabbath Day without a God’s People**. “I do not pray for the world.” Ecclesiology is the third prolegomena under which the doctrine of the Sabbath should be considered.

#### 7.7.1.4.2. The Capital Event

“*If Jesus wanted to memorialize the day of His Resurrection, He would have capitalized on the day of His Resurrection to make such a day the fitting memorial of that event*”. (You must recall eight years ago in South Africa, Potchefstroom.) This is desperation. Another big *begging the question*. Did Christ not *capitalize on the day of His Resurrection*? Then how could He have risen on the day and not have *capitalized* on it?

What could be the cause of something’s ‘*memorialization*’? Would not “*the incomparable importance of the event*” – an event of *capital* significance? If yes, then would not “*the incomparable importance of the Resurrection*” reveal Jesus wanted to memorialize the day? If the *importance*, in fact, “*the incomparable importance*” of Jesus’ resurrection does not “*make such a day the fitting memorial of that event*”, **NO LAW COULD**.

“*But none of the utterances of the risen Saviour reveal an intent to memorialize the day of His Resurrection by making it the new Christian day of rest and worship*”. Yet another *petitio principii*”, for did not the Saviour “*by making it the new Christian day of rest and worship... reveal His intent ... to memorialize the day of His Resurrection*”? I’m not talking of Sunday or the First Day, but of the Sabbath and God’s *intent* for it to be the Day of God’s Worship and of God’s Rest ... **a senseless thought for Christians if not** of God’s Worship and God’s Rest in Christ, through Christ and for Christ’s sake. The Sabbath is meant **for worship!**

But even graver the meaning of Jesus’ own “*utterance*”, that He, “the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath Day”! By what rights does Jesus say this? What gives Him the confidence to this Title, “Lord”? Lord is Jesus Christ by His single act of Victory over death through resurrection from the dead. By this one event of all time even the worthiness of God – even His very Being – stands or falls, for by the “**exceeding greatness** of His-Power-To-Us-Ward” – WHO is Jesus Christ – God in this singular event and in this singular day, “**ATTAINED**”! (Eph.1:19f, Phl.3:10,11, 1Cor.15:54-55) Even the creation cannot compare; even the finishing of the creation is like nothing. Here God finishes not only his creation, but vindicates Himself; here God enters into His Own Rest: is proven the divinity of Jesus the Christ; is proven His Lordship; is proven true His “*utterance*” and all and every other of His **Sabbath**-“*utterances*” that point to His LORDSHIP IN RESURRECTION from the dead. Each and every “*of the utterances of the risen Saviour reveal an intent to memorialize the day of His Resurrection by making it the new Christian day of rest and worship*”. Of course it is a **strange** Day and a **strange** Meaning: “Behold, I will do a new thing”. The New Seventh Day of the

New Creation is Day of God's Sabbath Rest and of "the People of God". God's Sabbath Rest and "the People of God": **THAT** make this Day, the New Day of God's worship. "For God concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke: And God rested on the Seventh Day". It would be utterly impossible to have or to expect another day – be it the First Day of the week – in its place! Whether the First or the Third Day, all other days are out of place where the Seventh Day should be.

*"None of the utterances of the risen Saviour reveal an intent to memorialize the day of His Resurrection by making it the new Christian day of rest and worship"?* Could this be true? Absolutely not! What, for example, Christ's declaration that "the Son of Man is Lord indeed of the Sabbath Day"? If one cannot see the connection in this between Jesus' resurrection from the dead – His Lordship Earned and Sealed – and the Sabbath – Day of Worship-Rest for being *that particular day* of the Event of Jesus' Lordship Earned and Sealed – one shall never see it. The Sabbath enjoys no honour if not the honour of **Jesus' Lordship** over it – a Lordship of **victory** over death in **resurrection** from the dead; the honour of the New Creation, for which God blessed the Sabbath Day.

*"Biblical institutions such as the Sabbath, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper all trace their origin to a divine act that establishes them."* Which *divine act establishes the Sabbath* as the **Christian Day** of Worship-Rest if it isn't Jesus' resurrection? If not Jesus' resurrection there is no such act as could. If not for Jesus' resurrection from the dead all his healings would be no better than, indeed would be nothing but witchcraft. It is not creation, but redemption, that establishes the Sabbath as the Christian Day of Worship-Rest. Jesus' resurrection is the Sabbath's *theological basis* by virtue of the single and immediate fact and relevant truth of the divinely willed and predestined coincidence of **Jesus' Resurrection** and **Sabbath's Daytime**; and of the **Sabbath's Daytime** and **God's New Creation**.

Surely *"there is no divine act for the institution of a weekly Sunday ... to commemorate the Resurrection"* because it never was the case nor ever would be the case. But, by virtue of both the *divine act* and the *institution* of such act as memorial, the **Sabbath Day** lacks no attribute or condition that should make of it the Day of Commemoration of Gods Creation **that is brought at one with** His Finished and saved creation, the New Creation by virtue of Jesus' resurrection ... "from the dead", as the Scriptures say!

*"On this matter"* – on the *divine act* and *institution* of the Lord's Day ... the Sabbath! – there is no *"silence of the New Testament"*. Its distinct audibility is as loud and clear as the **proclamation of Jesus The Risen Crucified Christ**. In its proclamation is distinct the Body

Proclaiming; in the Body Proclaiming is distinct the Day of its proclaiming. And in its Proclaiming and Day is distinct the Lord and Proprietor of both the Church and the Sabbath, and of its Faith which is the New Creation Faith. (I cannot see the possibility of talking of the Sabbath in the context – the restricted and restrictive context – of "creation" like Moltmann does. The only mental sphere of possibility of speaking of the Sabbath is the Christological, Soteriological, Ecclesiological.)

*"(It is very important since most of (the New Testament's) books were written many years after Christ's death and Resurrection"* when only that proclamation was condensed to *the New Testament's books* ... and when **still, the Sabbath** enjoyed such prominence in the life of the Church and in the thinking of its writers – in which Christ in His **resurrection** was foremost and supreme.

We have to look no further than the New Testament Creation, **the Church**, to find our **theological basis** of the Sabbath – it is **Jesus' resurrection** from the dead! *In the New Creation which Christ, by His resurrection, brought into being, we would expect to find* in its legacy – in its writings – *allusion to the religious meaning and observance of the weekly Day* in commemoration of His Resurrection ... **We indeed do find it: in the Sabbath Day in the life of Christ's Body**. The Sabbath is the legacy of the Church Apostolic as much as its Writings. And all, the Church, its Writings and its Sabbath, are the legacy of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

We find this solid theological foundation of the Sabbath well established in the New Testament and especially in the Gospels, in the Acts, and in the Sermon to the Hebrew Christians. It is a foundation cast on Jesus Christ in **resurrection** from the dead. In contrast *"the total absence of any such allusions (or indications) that such developments occurred"* with regard to the **First Day** of the week **must evidence** the introduction and innovation of it in the place of the Sabbath **for the very reasons of the Sabbath, usurped and corrupted**. Its total absence in the New Testament of the first century, must evidence Sunday's emergence *"in the post-apostolic period"*. Sunday got into the Church *"as a result of an interplay"* of many reasons **besides** the usurpation and corruption of **the Sabbath's Christian theological basis**. These secondary causes (which nobody has ever explained better than Prof. Bacchiocchi) contributed to the historical fact that Sunday won the day. But the beginning of the end of it in the Church of Christ started with the one fundamental to an understanding of the Sabbath – Jesus' **resurrection** "according to the **Scriptures**".



I haven't today got to Moltmann so much. Please do me the favour and send you this letter to Prof. Bacchiocchi? For he will just ignore me, and keep silence and keep it back from reaching his readers. I don't expect any to accept what I say. But I do expect they have the right at least to hear there's more than one opinion, and to put it right if wrong, for the sake of Christ and his Truth.

PS,

Says Prof. Bacchiocchi (p. 5 par. 5), "*... the essence of Christianity is a relationship with God. And the Sabbath provides the time and opportunity to cultivate such a relationship and experience moral and physical renewal.*"

Is it true for us as Christ's Church corporately? If not then it couldn't be true for us individually. Was this true of the Apostolic Church? No less than for today. Then imagine this basis, this *essence*, of Christianity in its relation to its Day of Realisation in the life of the Church contended, and you see two things happen first and together: **the Scriptures being corrupted and the doctrine being usurped**. You find both in Justin Martyr – before you find him vying the emperor's favour. You first see theology corrupted through the falsifying of the truth; only then the "*interplay*" of the many historic factors.

Our mistake in trying to find the origin of the replacement of the Sabbath by the Sun's Day is that we search too far. I see the first but temporary inroads of Sunday worship already in the first century. Such a conclusion is inevitable, just considering another statement of Prof. Bacchiocchi (p. 6, par. 2), "*Viewing the rest and redemption typified by the Old Testament Sabbath as realized by Christ's redemptive mission. New Testament believers regarded Sabbathkeeping as a day to celebrate and experience the Messianic redemption-rest ....*". The TWO questions – when trying to find the true "*theological basis*" for the Sabbath, its doctrine and its keeping – are, **1, How, where, and when** – ultimately but also essentially – is "*the rest and redemption typified by the Old Testament Sabbath*", "*realized by Christ's redemptive mission*"? **2, How, where, and when** – ultimately but also essentially – did the "*New Testament believers*", "*regard*" "*celebrate and experience*" that "*Messianic redemption-rest*"? The answers are TWO: **1, Jesus' resurrection from the dead; 2, The Sabbath.**

I don't believe a strange gospel! There's nothing weird in this! It's common sense! And it was the common sense of the Apostolic Church! The Apostolic Church celebrated Sabbath for celebrating Jesus' resurrection! It *regarded* the Sabbath not merely *as a day to celebrate and experience the Messianic redemption-rest as realised by Christ's redemptive mission* THE RESURRECTION EXCEPTED. This common sense of the first century Church is the thing that first was corrupted, then

applied to the Sun's Day ... through corrupting of the Scriptures and of Christian understanding – which is glaringly obvious and irrefutably the case already in Justin's apology. Justin's translation (paraphrasing) of the Gospel of Matthew can be read in English in for example the New King James Translation (New Authorised Version).

And please remember, I am writing to you while I am a "Hervormer", a Calvinist. I'm not even a Seventh Day Adventist. So why can't you people also see this?

Dear Prof. Webster,

I have not received reply from you. Only let me know if you're not interested in further discussion. I dislike vexing people my burning desire to share the joyful light of Scripture notwithstanding.

Here is a challenge – a challenge I pose you in Jesus' Name: Could you see the following as material to base your sermon on this coming Sabbath? If not, please tell me why not. My e-mail address is . My postal address is, 26 Scorpio Street, van Riebeeck Park, Kempton Park, 1619, Gauteng, Republic of South Africa.

#### 7.7.1.5.

##### **The Creation Completed in Grace and Judgement**

Thus "*on the Sabbath the creation is completed*". *The creation is not completed in the creation per se* whether *on the Sabbath* or no. Truth is only truth when the full. *Creation is completed in the fullness and finishing of it*, which is Christ and He, resurrected from the dead, **and only then, on the Sabbath!** It must be because of the Sabbath's predestined glory reflected from the glory that is God's in the face of **Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead**. The whole Bible knows the Seventh Day and no other, for this day and for to be this day. That is the Biblical tradition of the Sabbath although not of Christianity and certainly not Moltmann's.

"*The prospect of creation which is perceived – on the Sabbath*" is not it's being saved from destruction by the efforts of man, but by the rest which God avails in Himself **in Jesus Christ – "only then"**. *The prospect of creation* may, well be it, *perceived* in the Sabbath, but not without its completion in Christ – and in the Church worshipping Christ, on the Sabbath. It is for the sake of the Church that nature groans.

Because the Sabbath points to Christ it points to the overcoming; pointing to the overcoming, the overcoming of evil and sin is pointed at. The Sabbath is Law even before the coming of the Law! It does not point at "*salvation-rest*" exclusively. We haven't seen Jesus unless we behold sin and sinner and hell on the cross under God's just retribution. The saved see themselves when they see Christ on the cross dying for their

sins. But Christ's dying for us, shows us our rest. **"It is finished" is Jesus' resurrection already.** (That is the meaning of the word "*proleptic* / *proleptically*".) And this word of act – Word of God's Act – already is heard in the Genesis story.

The Sabbath is God's reminder to us of **this** – it points both to our redemption **and** judgement. For we are His new creation that has "Passed Over, from out of death into eternal life". This word of Christ, "is passed from death unto life" is precisely Israel's experience in the day of Yahweh's Passover when theirs was a coming out of Egypt as well as an entering into the promised land and they did not "come into condemnation" but saw their enemies in judgement day, and drowned. Their Sabbath's experience became Israel's reason for celebrating God's Holy Day. No different for us, Christian believers. For us also this is the theological basis of our Sabbath, its doctrine and its keeping. The Sabbath also to us, but because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, is the Fourth Commandment of God's Law. The Sabbath also to us, is "the Seventh Day concerning which God thus spoke" through and in **Israel and history**, that in it, He "rested from all his works He had accomplished". **But**, the Sabbath to us, Christians, is "the Seventh Day concerning which God thus spoke" through and in the history of **Jesus' of Nazareth**; that God "thus spoke" in that He "**raised this Jesus ye crucified**", and in **Him**, "rested from all his works He had accomplished".

"The Sabbath was made for man ...", let the Sabbath remind man of his sin and evoke in him a consciousness of judgement day! He who is Lord shall meet you on Judgement Sabbath in great want and hunger, not to set free, but to send into damnation. Says Augustine, "*O man, consider the greatness of thy sin by the greatness of the price paid for sin*". Yea! Indeed, Consider in the greatness of thy reward in Christ the greatness of thy sin! This the Sabbath reminds the Christian of. This is its theological basis, and, its ethics!

"*The Sabbath which blesses, sanctifies and reveals the world as God's*" perfect, restful, sinless, "*creation*". This is an unwarranted fantastically peaceful view of the Sabbath. The Sabbath not only tells the creation is God's; it also exposes creation as not God's creation – and therefore as sin and damned. The Sabbath rest is no natural rest; also no heavenly rest. The Sabbath itself rests on redemption rest – Christ's, availed in resurrection from the dead. The Sabbath now as since sin entered the heart of man "is a sign between Me and you, that I am your God and you My People". The Sabbath is no indicator of an apokatastasis – all will be saved; it is a sign of election: "Here are they that have the Faith of Jesus" ... those who have been privileged a remedy ... for sin!

Barth came very near to saying that the fall happened on the Sabbath Day. Moltmann sees the Sabbath only as the goal toward which

creation as nature moves; not as the starting point from which man started out into the world and history.

Genesis 2 **carries on** with the history of Genesis 1 with some additional perspectives on the two events of one and the same day, creation, and man's fall! Quote: Jesus of Nazareth, "*Therefor the Sabbath was made for man*". **The Sabbath was made with the view to man's salvation from sin.**

It is often argued that the Sabbath had no evening that ended it like the other six days of creation week. But they who say so forget that every creation week day starts with darkness; then God's action of creating creates the end-part of each day in light. On the day of man's creation – strictly speaking "in the evening breeze" of that day – while the Sabbath was prospective or already had started – God went out to meet with man, and called for him. Man then had sinned and feared to face God because he was a sinner. Genesis tells or supposes no period between man's creation and his fall.

The Seventh Day started in darkness of man's sin and death; and ended in light of God's rest and blessing. To the order of its very chronological structure the Sabbath is "*Messianic*". Its composition in the earthly terms of beginning, duration and end, is pregnant with ESCHATOLOGICAL, Christological, soteriological meaning. Or would you rather be content with a '*humanitarian*' expectation of creation Sabbath for its Christian value? The Jews – who also have a humanitarian Sabbath but reject Jesus – also claim a Sabbath without night-part! Some may call my thinking "allegorical". I answer, rather blame me for thinking exactly. "The Sabbath was made for man"; it means it was made with the view to his salvation from sin. It came after Adam's sinning. Not as an afterthought of God, but as God's providence. His mercy goes before. God, calling for Adam, is not surprised. He comes prepared. He is High Priest who on behalf of man will enter into his Holy – into his Rest which man because of unbelief, would not enter into. God swore they would not! **It is Christ** who calls Adam in the breeze of dusk. He is the Word of God.

So Adam fell the day he was created. I am in good company, "*The most probable and received opinion is that (Adam) fell the very same day in which he was created. So Irenaeus, Cyril, Epiphanius, and many others. ... 'Man being in honour, abideth not', Psalm 49:12. ... 'Adam being in honour, lodged not one night.' The Hebrew word for 'abide', signifies, 'To stay or lodge overnight'.*" (Here is an allegorical application of Scripture, which, in my estimation, is perfectly legitimate.) "*Soon as he sinned Adam forfeited paradise. His fall was sudden; he did not long continue in his royal majesty. ... As soon as Satan fell, he began to tempt mankind to sin; this was a murdering temptation. Satan was a murderer.*

*from the beginning’.*” (p. 137-138) No allegory!

Where is Adam on the first Sabbath Day? Because of man’s fall we notice nothing of his presence on God’s Sabbath Day! **But Christ stood in for man:** Male and Female, thus finishing God’s creation which He has created so “good” on the Sixth Day but has not perfected (“finished”) yet by the espousing of Man and Woman in Holy Wedlock to Himself in Sabbath’s Rest and Peace of the Seventh Day! How ached the heart of God for their absenteeism; “God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son.” How Christ the Bridegroom was the Father’s only Solace! How blessed and holy is the Seventh-Day-Of-God’s-Creation for this its solemnising **in the Son.** Come, let us place the joy and the dance of Proverbs 8:22-31 (Moltmann, p. 10) where it belongs – with Christ before the face of the Father in man’s place and on his behalf. (Named “Wisdom”!) It will imply man’s fall before this day of God’s contentment and refreshing springing from Jesus Christ only. It means Jesus’ resurrection ... FROM THE DEAD: according to the Scriptures already this very first Sabbath Day of creation-week. “In Him was Life and the Light was the Life of men. And the Light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” ... Life swallowed up death ... *epi-fohs-k-ousehi* ... “while being light” ... “towards the First Day” ... of man’s labours in the sweat of his brow.

Not a perfect creation and an immaculate nature together can save a man from perdition before the fall of night; it costs the grace of God. The first Sabbath of creation was God’s creation – “this is the Lord’s doing ... let us rejoice in it”. God **created** man Male and Female – sinless; but He **redeemed** us without ourselves. He redeemed us in Adam in the One that “stood (undaunted, Victor; the One that “overcame”, the One Who “withstood the devil” triumphantly) in the midst of the Throne – a Lamb as it had been slain” ... “before the foundation of the world”!

See! See the Sabbath of the Lord your God, that never, not for once, is not the Sabbath of the Lord YOUR God. Not – most importantly – the Sabbath the history of which is written up in Genesis 2! Now what does Paul say? Does he not say, “What is the exceeding greatness of his power **to us-ward**”? Herein is the greatness of God’s POWER in creation – that it is His Power **to us-ward** – His Power TO SAVE. It is God’s deed and presence with man – “YOUR God” – His most intimate union with man, in and through Jesus the Son of Man! (No wonder the “Son of Man” in Jewish concept is the glorious heavenly and divine Figure.)

Ah, God have mercy on me for that I may celebrate his Sabbath Day in this assurance of his mercies. How I weep that for so long I was blind; but am glad for now I see. How I weep for the Jews who keep a day without Meaning. How I weep for Christians, yes, they who are called by the Name of God-to-Us-Ward, yet who keep a day void of its

Lord for the sake of the letter of the Law.

Find Christ in Genesis 2 the first verses, or loose God’s Sabbath altogether! Then find the Sabbath in Christ in the Resurrection, or empty it of its content altogether!

From now on ... from the Sixth Day on which Adam was sent into the dark night of the Seventh Day’s beginning, from “east of the garden of Eden where are placed Cherubims with flaming sword that turn every way to keep the way of the tree of life” – of which Adam never had eaten ... from now on we see the Sabbath designated to play a significant role in the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation. The abyss of forgottenness (the Cherubims guard its way) into which the Sabbath disappears according to the patriarchal history of the Pentateuch betrays man’s unfortunate first acquaintance with it. The angel with fiery sword explains it all. Eden – Place of God’s Rest, Sabbath Rest, Place of Divine Joy – man was not soon to enter in again. Man would again – through Jesus Christ, when he would enter upon Calvary – Garden of Joy Called Eden. (See p. 229.) It consequently also does not surprise that the re-appearance of the Sabbath **coincides with the great moments of redemption**, throughout Israel’s history.

That old accusation levelled against the Jews and “their” Sabbath, that God gave them the Sabbath because of their sins might have contained more than what the accusers bargained for. Of course God gave the Sabbath to his People to be to them nothing less than a reminder of their plight and as a lash for their sloth. (“They entered not in because of unbelief.”) But God gave the Sabbath to his People also to be their freedom between offence and mercy; the protruding rock that prevents the sheep from falling to its death, where it rests in painful hurt, hoping on its Shepherd to come and save it – which He is faithful to do. (“For we which have believed, do enter into the rest”.)

The Sabbath being created to God’s plan and **providence** for **fallen** man, and not as pure bliss of unblemished nature, witnesses of the redemption **provided** in Jesus Christ.

“*The messianic era which Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed*” (lines 36, 38). This the Sabbath “*points to*” ... and beyond its realisation already in Jesus Christ in creation, points to again in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not in the first place realised horizontally, but vertically – **before time and history** – with its centre of gravity beneath the cross and resurrection on Golgotha’s Hill. The Gospel absorbs both the First Creation and the Final Recreation: “I Am – The First, and, The Last”. The Gospel stands planted in the earth and it springs from the earth – the tree (of crucifixion) between Creator and creation – as it stands **planted in the eternal Counsel of the Almighty in Jesus Christ** the Mediator between man and God.

Barth sees prayer as the contact point where the vertical breaks the horizontal surface – like a window opened towards heaven that admits the breeze from heaven. This Barth says while speaking of prayer and the Sabbath. (*Evangelical Theology*, 4, 14, p. 161f) The **resurrection** is creation's only hope. The Sabbath proclaims that hope. "See! I Am ... coming again". The end is near, it is coming ... "to us-ward". We – creation, nature, Sabbath – don't approach the end; the end approaches us. It is God who moves and we cannot prevent the day. We are immobile, in the prison of our sins and sinful nature. And so is creation because of us. Every Sabbath we are a few minutes admitted out of our cells to catch a little of the sun's rays though. We cannot avoid judgement day, but can only groan until our Release shall appear. "Therefore there remains a Sabbath-rest for the People of God", "Let us strive to enter", it is here! "He who has the Son, has life!" There's no sense in the Sabbath but for this sense: He who has the Son, has life, and shall live for the truth of it! There's no Sabbath but the Sabbath of the Covenant of Grace. It is a Sabbath with three eyes; one seeing the past; the other seeing the future; the third seeing the present : The life we now live we live by the Faith of Jesus; we live as his Body already; we already in the Son have eternal life; we already rejoice in the hope of his coming. "Creation" is created, "recreation"! Creation is joyful. It can groan in peace and hope. Creation may celebrate its Sabbath – God provided in Jesus Christ. (The Gospel doesn't answer scientific or political or social or ecological questions; it is the answer to sin and Life – and the Sabbath stands in the sign of that Gospel.)

This Sabbath cannot in the apex of that Covenant – Jesus' resurrection from the dead – be replaced, be dethroned, degraded, destroyed, by the highest of the dominions of the cosmos. (*stoicheia tou kosmou*) Creation as nature shall not destroy creation as grace, but creation as grace must have dominion over creation as nature in order to also have it saved. (Moltmann doesn't like the idea of dominance.) **The Sabbath as creation as grace** – its appointment is for God's occupation in creation as in redemption. (Again, another day cannot push the Sabbath out of its appointment like a dentist would switch one patient's date with another's.)

The Sabbath (the Seventh Day, the Scriptures says), is the Christian Sabbath and pointer to Jesus' redemption of his People. Maybe even the Day's number carries with it some "spiritual" or "religious" meaning. Whether or not the idea smacks of that thing Calvin warns against, "superstition", we cannot confuse it with any other day of the week because it is the Seventh Day of God's **creation**, and of **God's** creation – day of His redeeming recreation of creation. The seal of both the Sabbath's **divine truth** and **earthly reality** has been set in the

Lordship of Jesus Christ, **God's Word ... Incarnate! The Sabbath is creation as grace.**

Moltmann attempts to justify the validity and primacy of the **First** Day of the week in the *Messianic era* while **each and all** his arguments on behalf of the First Day, are **dependent** on the nature and meaning and reality of the **Seventh** Day of the week. As one by one his motives and reasons for the First Day are derived from it, the Sabbath is deprived of them. So it has been with each and every "Sunday"-argument of Christianity of all ages; so with the first and weightiest of all arguments, Christ's resurrection from the dead – God's finishing! It is claimed it happened on the First Day. It is claimed despite the Seventh Day's creation, the Seventh Day's total orientation and preparation and adorning and honouring for just that place among all dimensions and divisions of time and creation and Revelation – the Day of the resurrection of The Life and The Resurrection from the dead. "*The true hallmark of every biblical ... also every Christian doctrine of creation ... is the Sabbath*".

Ironically – "*curiously enough*" (Moltmann's phraseology.) – Sabbatharians won't so much as admit the "argument" of the Resurrection is a Scriptural one, while Sunday-keepers won't so much as admit the "argument" of the creation is one of salvation!

Yet, maintains Moltmann, "*the First Day of the week is the first day of the new creation*"! What could be the difference between a "*Christian creation*" and "*the new ... creation*"? *The doctrine of creation* may not be separated from Soteriology, from "*the new creation*". Creation-Sabbath in its very institution and beginning should not be dealt with as having no part in God's eternal purpose "as it is **in Christ**". The **Scriptures**, simply, does not allow us fill that creation-need, that need of grace – the need for the **Christian** Day of Worship-Rest – with another day. "*Every sabbath is a sacred anticipation of the world's redemption*", (p.6 last few lines ... famous last words.)

The Sabbath **is** it? The Sabbath was it from the beginning with the view to Christ and to Him in Resurrection from the dead. By saying, "*Every sabbath is a sacred anticipation ...*" Moltmann means, an "*anticipation of the world's redemption*" – the future restoration of "*creation*"; an ecological victory over the present forces of nature's destruction. He also means the mirror shatters and the reflection disappears the moment reality stands before it. He doesn't see the sabbath ... a sacred anticipation of the world's Redeemer as itself a created and abiding reality of hope! No, from out of the blue, it is **Sunday** Moltmann sees as realisation of the sacred anticipation of the world's Redeemer. From out of the blue? Yes. Because he – like all Christianity – attributes to the First Day what belongs to the Seventh Day: "*The public*

*ministry of Jesus of Nazareth began ... with the proclamation of the messianic sabbath". But! "Through his giving of himself to death on the cross, and through his resurrection from the dead, the messianic era which he proclaimed was actually initiated, according to the Christian view."* By the one act of Jesus' giving himself to death and resurrection from the dead "the proclamation of the messianic sabbath" no longer goes on. It stopped. "The messianic era" that through all times before has been "proclaimed" by the Sabbath, afterwards, is no longer "proclaimed", but has been "actually initiated". "That is why Christians celebrate the first day of the week as the feast of the resurrection: it is the first day of the new creation".

Moltmann rejects the congruence that as through the actual initiation and the actual presence of the Sabbath Day in the proclamation and anticipation of the Messianic era, the Sabbath itself was carried with through and in and towards its proclamation and anticipation. The Sabbath itself reached to and reaches unto the End – Jesus of Nazareth who gave himself to death, and who again rose from the dead. The End of the "old" is the "new" "actually initiated". The Seventh Day of God's creating his creation, as type, projected and awaited its anti-type "according to the Scriptures": "The Sabbath of the Lord your God" – typical of redemption by Jesus Christ. The Sabbath itself – for being and to be the very day of God's Rest – found its own rest and its own finishing, in Christ. It is the Sabbath that meets its fulfilment. **It** – not the First Day – gets filled with "Messianic meaning". No other vessel besides is thus filled with "Messianic meaning". And *that is why Christians should celebrate the Seventh Day of the week as the feast of the resurrection* and not the First Day of the week: for the Seventh Day of God's week of creating *is the first day of the new and perfected creation*. Howbeit God doesn't give as reason to oblige the Sabbath Commandment that it was the first day, or that it was the seventh, but that it was the Sabbath – God's (Day of) Rest – and that therefore, it was the Seventh Day!

The Sabbath *is the first day of the new creation*. At first – in time – creation proleptically already had been recreated in Christ on the Seventh Day being the day of God's completed, "FINISHED", fulfilled creation. The Sabbath of "finished" creation, was Sanctified Day of God's creating, the "Seventh Day" of His speaking, "set apart" with the view to Christ. The Sabbath the creation's Seventh Day, Sabbath of the "finished" creation of God, became creation's first day because of what Christ, had done.

But the Sabbath, in importance, *is the first day of the new creation*. The Seventh Day of the week in its realised prophetic meaning in Jesus of Nazareth's death and resurrection from the dead is the day of

God's completed, "FINISHED", fulfilled, recreated creation – God's Seventh Day of Blessing and Rest. It is creation's first in that state. The Seventh Day is God's new creation, the "finished", recreated creation's first day.

"Speaking This Day", says Christ – Infinitive of noun force – "is this Scripture" – present tense ... fulfilled in your ears" (Lk.4). "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me ...". (An absolute Present Tense for no verb.) "This", Jesus, "on the Sabbath", "(prophetically realised) began to say" (*ehrcsato leghein*) – the Messianic era has started. It started Jesus "speaking this day". The Word is the realisation of the Kingdom. With both feet Christ stood within the Year of Jubilee, and, with both feet, within the Sabbath Day, "this day". It was the Christ's Era as much as it was the Christ's Day. The Sabbath *therefore* means, that *Christians are perceiving creation in the light of the resurrection of Jesus* (not in the light of the world's resurrection), and *are discerning reality in the light of its New Creation* – the Kingdom of Jesus Christ – "in the world but not of the world".

The Christian understanding is neither the heavenly Sabbath of a Barnabas or an Augustine, nor the "creation" Sabbath of a Moltmann.

*"The light of the resurrection is a light that fills even times past ... for their coming redemption. The light of Christ's resurrection is the light of the Christian Sabbath. But it is more than that. It shines as messianic light on the whole sighing creation, giving it, in its transience, an eternal hope that it will be created anew as the 'world without end' "* ... with two pre-suppositions, 1, *The whole sighing creation* is shined upon forwards: The Second Advent of Jesus Christ and all it entails for a *sighing creation*, besides all it entails for a rejoicing Bride of the Bridegroom. 2, *The whole sighing creation* is shined upon backwards: Even *times past* are shined upon – the "first" creation receiving its enlightenment from the "new" creation. So that it could truly be said that "God on the Seventh Day rested".

The Sabbath is sign of God's truth and trust; of his omnipotence – for He is our God; we his People. If the Sabbath shows our inalienable belonging to God, it is the Sabbath Day by the guarantee of Christ – no other way, no other day. If Christ is our Surety – and the Sabbath is sign to it – by the guarantee of Christ – no other way to it; no other day to it. If Christ is the Author and Finisher of our Faith – and the Sabbath sign to it, then the Sabbath, by the guarantee of Christ, be day of Christ's resurrection from the dead – no other day!

7.7.1.6.  
**A Covenant of Grace**

27 January 2002

“*I humbly offer to your hands*”, says John Flavel in his letter of introduction to his forty sermons, *The Fountain of Life Opened Up ... A Display of Christ In His Essential And Mediatorial Glory*, “*these discoveries of Christ. ... if may be (they) be any way useful to your souls ... in obtaining, or in clearing their interest in Him, my heart shall rejoice.*” *Useful to one’s soul ... in obtaining and in clearing an interest in Christ – Christ In His Mediatorial Glory ...* that’s what must count of theology. Theology that does not *display Christ*, does not *discover His Glory*, and that does not apply Christ to the soul (theology the way Spurgeon and the Puritans practised it) – **fails as theology!**

How much of this does one find in Moltmann’s *theology of creation*? I have not yet got to his beginning in *Preface to God in Creation*. Maybe because his approach is one of treating on the “*Spirit*” so formally. Actually I find his ideas on the “*Spirit*” very difficult. This “*Spirit*” permeates creation, yet he talks of it as “*Trinitarian*”? Is this the “*Spirit*” that brings sinners to Christ? And if so, would this Christ thus discovered be the One who has redeemed creation and shall again return to save creation while finally judging it and “*human beings*”? Maybe I should not speak from the background of his *Preface* and the first 17 pages on *God in Creation* only. But then I cannot begin where he begins.

By coincidence I happened to read Barth’s response to Eberhard Bethge’s letter announcing the publication of his biography on Bonhoeffer. Barth found it strange why Bonhoeffer wanted to go to India. Was there something there that one cannot find in the West, I assume? What one cannot find in the Christian Faith? I ask, metaphorically, Why does Moltmann want to go to India? Has India perhaps got a spirit that he finds in nature, that “*unceasing inflow of the energies and potentialities of the cosmic Spirit*”? (p. 9, par. 5) Which is the same thing he says on p. xii, near the bottom, “*The inner secret of creation is this indwelling God. ... If we ask about creation’s goal and future, we ultimately arrive at the transfiguring indwelling of triune God in his creation, which through that indwelling becomes a new heaven and a new earth*”.

The mention of the “*triune God*” is artificial and superfluous, “*cloudy nonsense; enigmatical ... and wilful obscurity*”. (Flavel’s phraseology.)

What, in any case, has this “*transfiguring indwelling of God in his creation*” to do with Christ and the glory of Christ, and the redeeming of men’s **souls**? What has it got to do with the application of grace to one’s heart? – which is what Genesis 2-3 is all about! Actually a *creation which through the indwelling and transfiguring indwelling of God becomes a*

*new heaven and a new earth*, cancels “*creation’s goal and future*”. For *creation’s goal and future* is Christ’s death and resurrection; and his Second Advent.

What has such a view of creation and the Spirit as Moltmann’s got to do with the **Sabbath**? Does not the Sabbath have to do with God’s **redeeming of man’s soul**? If not, we don’t believe the Christian Sabbath! Moltmann’s own assertion about the Sabbath belies his view of creation and the Spirit, because “*the inner secret of the Sabbath of creation is God’s rest*”.

So I’ll rather skip Moltmann’s Preface, and go straight to where you in fact started with him, page 277, Section 11, *The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation*, “*... creation and the Sabbath belong together. It is impossible to understand the world properly as creation without a proper discernment of the Sabbath ...*”. There’s no doubt in my mind there’s nothing one could point at and say, This agrees with the first principles of Christian doctrine – understood the way a Flavel would. *It is impossible to understand the world properly as creation without a proper discernment of its redemption in Christ*. That’s the **whole** Bible’s understanding of creation as well as of the Sabbath. A Christian simply won’t get that *proper understanding of the world* or of himself as God’s creation *with* or through a *discernment of the Sabbath* that is not the **Christian Sabbath** or that is the Sabbath **for any reason other than the Christian reason or Christian Faith**. There is no prospect and no possibility of two Sabbaths in the Christian Faith. The Christian Sabbath is the Old Testament Sabbath; the Old Testament Sabbath is the Christian Sabbath ... and both for the same and single reason, that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Lord’s Day with all that that means. Some reasons aren’t reserved for this Day; the other for that Day. All reasons are subordinate and equal to the one: God’s finishing his creation through redemption in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead.

I don’t find Moltmann’s purpose for the Sabbath in the Bible, to be quite frank. If the Sabbath only makes it *possible to understand the world as creation properly*, it means not much; and all the meaning it might have had, is obsolete. Moltmann saying “*creation and the Sabbath belong together*” by implication says, **redemption** and the Sabbath do **not** belong together, because the Sabbath’s **whole** meaning by his reasoning is taken up in creation.

No! I see not the Bible say, “*The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation*”! Rather, *The Sabbath: The Feast of God’s Rest!* And therefore, *The Sabbath: The Feast of Redemption!* That must inevitably and ultimately make the Sabbath the Day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

Now refer my previous writing to you, that it is untrue to say, “*In the Sabbath stillness men and women no longer intervene in the*

*environment through their labor. They let it be entirely God's creation. They recognize that as God's property creation is inviolable; and they sanctify the day through their joy in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of creation".*

I'm afraid, to *sanctify the day through joy in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of creation* is empty ceremonialism dished up with *bouquet garni*. The truth contradicts the whole tenor of Moltmann's assertion. Especially if he here has in mind creation's first Sabbath Day.

1. To "*sanctify the day through joy in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of creation*" is to miss the objective of the Sabbath and of Sabbath keeping altogether, for true *sanctifying of the day through joy in existence as God's creatures* is absolutely impossible if *existence* is not **redeemed** existence: **atoned** for and **justified** and **sanctified** existence – the *Existence* within the Fellowship of Believers – the Church. Moltmann's conception of the role the Sabbath has to play for *God's creatures within fellowship*, does not reckon with **Christ's work** through the **Holy Spirit** in creating the only sphere of real "*joy in existence*", the **Church**, the Body of **redeemed** 'human beings'. **The total spectrum of Christian Doctrine is involved** in the "*proper discernment of the Sabbath*".

2. Man did not – the first Sabbath of creation – "*recognize creation as God's property*". The opposite is true. Man on the first Sabbath of creation – or before the first Sabbath – **disregarded** *creation as God's property*. He ate of the tree – God's tree – that God forbid him to eat of. Man **violated** God's creation from the beginning, and only the redemption Christ wrought for man – from the beginning – will work the redemption for creation when He comes again – in the end. Moltmann's concept of *the Sabbath's creation meaning* is irreconcilable with Christ's **Second Advent**.

3. "*In the Sabbath stillness men and women no longer intervene in the environment through their labor*". That makes of holy and blessed work, a curse. Man was given his duty of work before he fell in sin. Work was not Adam's sin, nor his punishment for sin, and all man's works were supposed to glorify God. Labour on the Sabbath day for unfallen man **would** not have been sin. Nowhere does the Genesis story of the Sabbath prohibit man to work. Only much later was the prohibition of work on the Sabbath introduced through the giving of the Law on mount Sinai. In Genesis though, the Sabbath was '*still*', not because no work was supposed to be going on, but only because man and woman were not present, but were driven out. They first *intervened in the environment through their labour* under sin. Their sin did the first *intervening* (I would

rather use the word "interference") with creation. Moltmann does not keep proper reckoning with **man's fall into sin and total depravity**.

4. "*In the Sabbath*" there was nothing of the "*stillness*" which Moltmann presumes. On the contrary, the Sabbath resounded with God's joy and rejoicing in that on the Seventh Day God "finished all his works" ... not merely God's works of creation, but God's works of creation's recreation or redemption in Jesus Christ. The Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world in the sense of from eternity in the Counsel of the Almighty. Yet here on the first Sabbath, the first Day of Completed creation, the Lamb slain from eternity was pledged to fulfil God's design in the framework of man's and creation's **time and existence** as for being under the *status quo* of **sin**. (God made man's time His – **fallen** man's. Barth. That means God created the Sabbath to that end.)

And man's "*joy in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of creation*" was a truth and a reality **in Christ only**, and in the pleasures of the interrelationship of God Tri-Una. Moltmann's view of Creation-Sabbath seems not to have taken notice of the **Second Person of the Godhead** properly. (Christology)

5. Not man *sanctified the day*". God did. Man, through sinning **forfeited** the "*joy in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of creation*". "*A proper discernment of the Sabbath*" shows a Sabbath that *points forward* to redemption and the restoration of God's original purpose and original creation **in full accord** of *joy in existence* and within **perfect fellowship of creation**. "*The creation of the world*" (no sin) cannot "*point forward to the Sabbath*" (which is by reason of sin). (p. 5, 3.) The Sabbath *points forward to the world and its creatures within the fellowship of redemption* – *within the fellowship* and fulfilment of God's **finishing! Moltmann's Sabbath-view doesn't do justice to God's providence** – God's Providence both as attribute and action of His Divine Person ... of "*Theology*" proper.

6. Instead of letting "*the environment ... be entirely God's creation*", man, through stopping with the work God gave him to do: "to keep" *the environment entirely God's creation*, sinned. Man violently divorced creation and Sabbath Day. What God joined, man put asunder. Man raped his environment – it became a God-forsaken and Godless world. Man killed God's joy. He crucified Christ. God's Sabbath Day notwithstanding, followed. God does not forsake the works of His hands. He is faithful. His Providence creates out of chaos, order; evil He turns into good. (Almost all of creation was God's acts of ordering ... more than of creating out of nothing. God's accomplishment of the ordering of creation was the stronger accomplishment. Out of chaos God created order. **So Jesus rose from the dead** – from the realms of hell, sin and devil – and was exalted to life above death and chaos.) Moltmann's

doctrine doesn't properly keep reckoning with **Creation**.

7. Therefore sin notwithstanding, yeah, because of sin, God provided for rest, and entered into His Own Rest. ... "On the Seventh Day". The Seventh Day as God's Sabbath of Rest is that Sabbath that points forward to **recreated** creation. That Sabbath was the Sabbath of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. As Moltmann says, "*Every Sabbath is a sacred anticipation of the world's redemption*".

The problem only, is, that Moltmann means "*every Sabbath*" as every Sabbath in *Israel's* history. *Israel's* Sabbath points "*beyond itself*". And "*beyond itself*" entails that the Sabbath of *Israel*, **discontinues** from that point it points to onwards.

The first Sabbath of God's creating also, to Moltmann is another matter. "*The Sabbath*", says Moltmann, before he actually refers to specifically the Sabbath that belonged to *Israel*, "*is the prefiguration of the world to come*". Now "*the world to come*" is of course the world without sin or death; the recreated, "*new*" creation. The Sabbath Moltmann means, being "*the prefiguration of*" **that** world, necessarily also will be a Sabbath without sin and death, which could only be the first 'pristine' Sabbath when the world was created. As I have previously said, Moltmann takes this Sabbath Day as his starting point. He never considers it for being the Seventh Day in creation-order – he never sees the Sabbath as the point **towards which** God moved in creating. This Sabbath **towards which** God moved in creating must have arrived when creation already had been history, moving from the point where temporality was introduced as a result of sin. According to Moltmann's view, however, the sinless Sabbath had to have existed **before man's fall**. Because it too was of a sinless nature so to speak, this Sabbath could be a pre-figuration of another world that would be sinless. A Sabbath of a sinful and temporal kind cannot be the pre-figuration of a world that is sinless and without death and therefore without temporality and therefore without redemption! **Moltmann's doctrine doesn't give proper perspective of the essence of the Sabbath itself.**

8. Even where Moltmann says, "*the crown of creation is not the human being; it is the Sabbath*", he supposes a 'sinless' Sabbath: "*Man stands together with all other earthly and heavenly beings in the same hymn of praise of God's glory, and in enjoyment of God's Sabbath pleasure over creation, as He saw that it was good. Even without human beings, the heavens declare the glory of God.*" (p. 31, par. 2.)

This supposes that God deemed the creation good without the work of Christ for the redemption of man – and without the work of Christ for the redemption of creation! Moltmann says his view does away with the "*anthropocentric view of the world*" and instead offers a "*theocentric*" and "*biblical world picture*".

But that is highly improbable. Man shines in his absence on the first Sabbath Day. But, man and *all other earthly and heavenly beings stand together in the same hymn of praise of God's glory, and in enjoyment of God's Sabbath pleasure over creation, as He saw that it was more than good* – even "the excelling greatness of his Power To Us-Ward". Now, *even human beings, together with the heavens declare the glory of God*. "It was in Sabbath's time, its being light that shines against the First Day of the week." This, is the first Seventh Day of God's creation in "*pre-figurative*" sense. This, is its meaning, "**pro-phetically**" – "**spoken as of before**".

In the very declaration "and God saw that it was good", and even in the declaration, "very good", is hidden "the mystery of the ages". In that Word is pre-figured this Word: "Why do you call me good? Only one is good, who is God!" God created with the eye to Christ, and only the way to Christ could God pronounce, "Good!" Moltmann is right, "*the crown of creation is not the human being*". But he is wrong, for *the crown of creation*, also, is **not** the Sabbath, but Christ! And Christ would enter 'creation', as 'human being' – Christ Incarnate, Jesus of Nazareth.

"*That is why ...*" God only "on the **Seventh, Day**", "finished". It says not, "On the **Sabbath** God finished", but, "on the Seventh Day". Not even in the New Testament do we find it reads "on the Sabbath God finished"; for here also, we read, "on the Seventh Day" (Hb.4:4-5). But on the Sixth Day God said, "It is very good" ... yet not "finished", and therefore not sanctified, and therefore not blessed yet ... and therefore not "Rest" ... not yet! Creation awaits its crown. It will not be creation; it will not be 'human being'. It will be called "Rest", "the Prince of Peace" – God's Rest, God's Blessed One, God's Holy, God's Perfection – the Alpha and the Omega, the Amen of the creation of God: Creation's Crown will be its redemption and Redeemer, its resurrection and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Only then, "In Sabbath's time!"

But, "Through unbelief they entered not", so that "God swore that they would not enter in".

In the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ creation finds its Crown. We can spell that Crown with a capital letter now, for it is creation's King who wears it. Not the Sabbath. Don't take away the Sabbath's honour by giving it the honour of its Lord. Moltmann does the Sabbath no good to call it creation's crown. Give the Sabbath its honour due – its honour bestowed on it by its Lord, that "the Sabbath was made for the sake of man" in his lost state of sin, to rest the weary pilgrim, and to be unto him the shade of the palm trees of Elim on his way to the Promised Land. Away with a "Sabbath of creation" doctrine! It's God's! **Moltmann's Sabbath doctrine does injustice to the Sabbath's doxological meaning.**



## 7.7.1.7.

**About What We Read For Gospel**

14 November 2001

Dear Mr Edwin de Kock,

I am indeed grateful that you acknowledged my writing to you. Very, very rarely do people care! They don't care about anything, not even about such bad taste as my remark about Prof. Bacchiocchi. Not even Prof. Bacchiocchi himself cares. Maybe he doesn't care because I am just Mr Nobody with an enthusiasm for unpopular truth who dares to confront him (and perhaps his Church). So now you know who I am and why I sent you the e-mail. Unfortunately this mail only concerns one factor of one factor of yet another and so there's no perspective on the whole in it.

But it does show attitude in reaction – the worst of which is simply to ignore.

I am for thirty years trying to find people to discuss some serious problems with the Church's keeping of Sunday instead of the Sabbath; and found but few! Of course the first 'problem' when discussing these problems is the Scriptures itself. Actually, consider that the Scriptures but very recently got available for the ordinary Christian. All Bibles in all translations of four centuries from the invention of printing had been but a small fraction of copies printed by a single Bible Society in just one year. And since then till about the turn of the twentieth century, the number of Bibles printed, again was but a fraction of what followed soon after. The most interesting aspect of these sudden increases is that they coincide, first, with missionary activity, and, second, with Roman Catholic predominance! These two phases reveal another and most important fact, namely, that almost every translation – no, each and every translation of the mission-phase, virtually was made from the old "Reformation Translations" like the KJV and Luther's. If and when the Greek was used, it was the TR. But since the Roman Catholic involvement with Bible Societies, translations soared and took on a different character! The Nida Commission in South Africa – as elsewhere – determined, 1, that translations would use the new Texts (Nestle et al), and 2, should steer away from literal translation. Exactly this is there – for everybody without any knowledge of Greek – to see. AND THIS IS THERE TO SEE AND NOT TO SEE IN EVERY PASSAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT DEALS WITH EITHER THE SABBATH OR THE FIRST DAY. This I believe, happened in fulfilment of Prophecy ! And this is what happened in the new Greek 'translation' you quote. (It is no translation, I dare to say; it is a typical manipulation.) The beast shall change Law and Times, that is, the Scriptures and the Scriptures where it is the most practical thing in the life of God's People :

its Day of Worship. Remember I write as a Calvinist; I belong to the Reformed Church; I am a Protestant that goes along with the Church that believes in the 'Sabbath' ... but just here, clashes with it. Now it is my aim to bring into the open the lies translated into God's Word. That is why I wrote to you; why I am in a struggle with Bacchiocchi and anyone else who endorses and defends these distortions of the Scriptures. And that is who I am. Don't bother to know anything else about me. It is not a matter about me or anything about me. I must be a madman for Christ, a Bible-puncher and fundamentalist of the first degree, that is, one who believes in the Inspiration and absolute trustworthiness and absolute authority of the Bible in matters of Faith and Practice.

I quote you a few things prominent scholars have said,

**Defining the Problem**

John Wenham, starts his book, *Easter* [Passover] *Enigma* (Paternoster Press 1984 chapter *An Intriguing Puzzle*), thus: "This Jesus God raised up, and of that, we are witnesses", said Peter on the day of Pentecost. And from that day to this the resurrection of Jesus has been the spearhead of the Christian case. From it flows belief in the deity of Christ and all the other of the testimony of the New Testament witnesses. It is not of course essential to belief in the resurrection that the witnesses be faultless, but the whole case is gravely impaired if they can be shown to be seriously unreliable.

Now it so happens that the story of Jesus' resurrection is told by five different writers, whose accounts differ from each other to an astonishing degree. So much so that distinguished scholars one after another have said categorically that the five accounts (Paul's included) are irreconcilable. Going back to the last century, the great radical P.W. Schmiedel, said: "The Gospels ... exhibit contradictions of the most glaring kind. Reimarus ... enumerated ten contradictions; but in reality their number is much greater." Even the doughty conservative, Henry Alford, wrote: "Of all harmonies, those of the incidents of these chapters are to me the most unsatisfactory ... they seem to me to weaken instead of strengthening the evidence ... I have abandoned all idea of harmonising throughout."

Coming to this century, P. Gardner-Smith says: "No ingenuity can make the narration of Luke consistent with that of Mark, much less is it possible to reconcile the picture presented by the fourth evangelist with the accounts of any of the synoptic writers. Mutually contradictory narratives cannot all be true ... Nothing can be made of a jumble of contradicting statements." E. Brunner says: "The sources contradict one another, and only a 'harmonising' process which is not too much concerned about truth, could patch up a fairly connected account of the events ... Such a dishonest way of dealing with the subject really has

*nothing to do with 'faith in the Word of God'; it only serves to support the disastrous prejudice that Christian faith is only possible in connection with historical dishonesty." A.M. Ramsey, a relatively conservative writer, says, "It is a fascinating study to attempt to harmonise what the evangelists tell ... Up to a point the attempt may be successful, but a limit to the success is always reached." "That we should expect to be able to weave the stories into a chronological and geographical plan seems inconceivable."*

Wenham himself concluded: *"I was impressed in my early studies of the resurrection stories by the seemingly intractable nature of the discrepancies"* <sup>p.10c</sup> *"With more recent writers", Wenham says, "the verdict is the same." P.Benoit (1969): "I think we have to give up any idea of reconciling John and the synoptics." C.F. Evans (1970) speaks of "the impression that it is not simply difficult to harmonise these traditions, but quite impossible." N. Perrin (1977) speaks of "glaring discrepancies." J.K. Elliott (1979) says, "it is obvious that we cannot reconcile the accounts." I.H. Marshall (1977), however, speaks more cautiously (and challengingly?): "This is not to say that the narratives are necessarily irreconcilable, but that so far nobody has produced a convincing hypothesis."* <sup>p. 10b</sup> (Emphasis CGE)

#### **A Convincing Hypothesis**

The second century Alexandrian philosopher Celsus ridiculed the Gospel record of Jesus' resurrection, *"Everyone saw his suffering, but only one disciple and half an insane woman saw him after his resurrection"*. To answer this accusation, not by pointing out its inaccuracies, but to declare that the Gospels *"describe in fact the origin of the faith of the resurrection and not the fact of the occurrence itself"*, is to timidly **apologise** for *"inaccuracies"* in the Gospels. To say that *"the resurrection is no unique Christian phenomenon"*, is to place Jesus' resurrection **on a par with "religion"** of which the very unrealistic nature is such that there can be no idea of truth or accuracy. To say that the writers of the Gospels were *"concretely theologising"*, does not make the question, *"What did really happen there?"*, *"the wrong question"*. Without **concrete fact**, the **answer** is wrong, and not the question. To say that Jesus rose *"on the First Day"* (traditionally literal) does not mean *"the third day after the crucifixion"*, but *"an insinuation to the first day of creation – the beginning of a totally new era"*, is pure **allegory, denying** every bit of trustworthy factualness of Jesus' resurrection. His resurrection was **"from the dead"** – and a no more historically factual basis can be given it than that. The Gospels **want to tell of Jesus' resurrection**. Their message is founded on the *"naked historical fact"* of Jesus' resurrection, and contains no message otherwise. The *'fact'* and every *'fact'* around it should be gotten straight and not be beaten about.

Ramsay mentions the *"chronological and geographical plan"* into which the stories are to be *"woven"*. The *"limit"* he finds ever present when trying to solve the *"enigmas"*, and at which also Wenham comes to an unsatisfactory halt, is created by the **one-dimensionality** of every *"conservative"* as well as of every *"liberal"* effort to explain them. What every investigator – to the present writer's knowledge – has left totally out of consideration, is the **other** dimension of reality besides the *'chrono-logical'* and the *'geographical'*, namely the factor of **time**. Regarding the *'Easter Enigmas'*, all the different and *'differing'* stories actually make up **two main stories, the stories of two consecutive days**. Looking at them from this perspective, then – if any, only minor difficulties might remain, while a coherent and satisfying picture of a **real** resurrection emerges. Like Joseph of Arimathea, one should *"take courage"* and *"go into"* the problem with the view to *"produce a convincing hypothesis"* that will mirror *"accurate and independent thinking ... without ingenuity"*.

For the reader who would **not allow any kind of discrepancy** in the Gospels where they tell of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, or, who would not *'explain'* it away allegorically, good reason exists to **doubt** the assumption that Jesus was crucified on the **Friday** and was resurrected on the **Sunday**. Where tradition has **one Friday-story** of Jesus' crucifixion, death, **and burial**, this reader will find a **Thursday-story, and, a Friday-story**. The first story – that of the first day – tells of the crucifixion and death of Jesus. The second story – that of the second day – tells of Jesus' burial.

This investigation endeavours to show how this conclusion is reached. First, only two examples will be given to indicate how it came about that the present writer noticed some first indications in the Gospels to this effect. The present writer is of the conviction that an **honest and credible approach** will open the way toward a perfectly acceptable understanding of the Passover and Resurrection narratives. **A solution does reveal itself in the Gospels. The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace** is an endeavour at illustrating the fundamentals to this solution. We hope to enable the reader to conclude, in Wenham's words, that *"It now seems to me that these resurrection (and Passover) stories exhibit in a remarkable way the well-known characteristics of accurate and independent reporting."*

### The Exodus And 14th Nisan

End of four hundred and thirty years	1	4	Even the selfsame day <sup>12:41</sup> Eph1:10
1	4	1	5
The First Day put away leaven 12:6	Eat the flesh in the night <u>Roasted bitter</u> 12:8	At midnight the Lord smote the firstborn 12:29 Israel went away :29 Took dough upon shoulders 12:34	
<u>“Kill the lamb between the nights”</u> 12:6	It is a night to be much observed 12:42	Journeyed from Rameses	to Succoth 12:37 Baked cakes 12:39 day out of Egypt 13:4 From Succoth to .....Etham near the wilderness 14:2 The Lord said, turn and camp at Pihahiroth between Migdol and the sea 14:3 Wilderness shut them in 14:9 Egyptians overtook them 4:12 We should die in the wilderness
		This ye came	Nmb.33:3

### Out on the 15th and In on the 16th Nisan

The lamb was slain on the afternoon of the fourteenth Nisan. Its flesh only was eaten after sunset just before midnight on the following day of fifteenth Nisan – which started with sunset. When Israel ate the Passover sacrifice the very first night, they only ate it “bitter” – with nothing else. **They did not eat unleavened bread then.** They only baked unleavened cakes after they had reached Succoth and it had become day. They “prepared themselves no victuals”,<sup>12:39</sup> and ate these cakes before the end of the day, on the day after the lamb was

slaughtered. Unleavened bread was their only sustenance for the whole week. They first suffered thirst, three days after passing the Red sea.<sup>15:22-</sup>

<sup>23</sup> They probably spent the seventh day after they had crossed the red sea, 23rd Nisan, at Elim. “There were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees” and abundance of food and water. It was the Sabbath:

<sup>15:27</sup> “From Red Sea”<sup>Ex.15:22a</sup> – 17th Nisan;

“Into Shur”<sup>Ex.15:22b</sup> – 18th Nisan;

“Three days in Wilderness of Shur”<sup>Ex.15:22c</sup> – 19 to 21 Nisan;

“Come to Mara”<sup>Ex.15:23-26</sup> – 22nd Nisan;

“Come to Elim”<sup>Ex.15:27</sup> – 23rd Nisan – Psalm 23. (The Psalms are arranged so as to be read from the 1st Nisan. Psalm 2 therefore is a Sabbath's Psalm as is the 16th. Cf. Acts 13 and 2) Later on – only after Israel had entered Canaan after another forty years – and only after the ceremony had become formalised – the eating of the flesh and the eating of the unleavened bread were made to coincide. Consequently the date for eating the lamb – 14 Nisan – was changed to 15 Nisan by reckoning the day from sunset in stead of from sunrise. The four hundred and thirty years of slavery ended that very day and the new era was entered with that very night, the “night to be much observed”. Then did the Lord bring Israel “out of Egypt”. That day of fifteenth Nisan the Lord led Israel into the situation where they faced death. They had a Jonah's experience. “They were entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.”<sup>14:3</sup> Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army, all the horses and all the chariots overtook them encamping by the sea beside Pihahiroth before the god of typhoons<sup>9</sup> to die in the wilderness”.<sup>12</sup>

Thus did the Lord bring Israel out of Egypt and came they on the point of going through the sea into the Promised Land. “Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will shew to you to day. The Lord shall fight for you. The angel of God went before the camp of Israel and the pillar of cloud stood behind and it came between the Egyptians and Israel and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these all night. The Lord by a strong wind all that night caused the sea to retreat and made it dry land, its waters divided. The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground and the waters were a wall unto them. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them. The sea returned in its strength when the morning appeared and covered all the host of Pharaoh. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did and believed the Lord. Cf. Eph.1:11-12 Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. The depths have covered them. They sank into the bottom. The earth swallowed them. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, o Lord, hath dashed in

pieces the enemy: Ps.92:7 – **a Psalm for the Sabbath!** (93 in LXX) In the **greatness of thine excellency** thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee. By the greatness of thy arm **thy people pass over**, o Lord, whom thou hast **purchased**.<sup>Eph.1:14</sup> Thou shalt **bring them in** and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance.<sup>Ps.92:12-13</sup>

“And they took their journey from Elim ... and came unto the wilderness of Sin ... on the **fifteenth day of the second month** ... And the whole congregation murmured ...<sup>16:1-3</sup> Then said the Lord ... I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate **every day** ... On the sixth **day** they shall prepare ... twice as much as they gather daily ... **Toward evening** (today, the first day of the six days) ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; and in the morning (of the second day) ye shall see the glory of the Lord. ... The Lord shall give you flesh to eat toward evening and in the morning **bread to the full** ...<sup>4-8</sup> And they gathered it **every morning** ... On the sixth **day** – **not: “the sixth time”**, they gathered twice as much<sup>21-22</sup> ... So the people rested on the **seventh day**.”<sup>30</sup> [“At even”: the Hebrew word, *Ereb*, LXX *hespera*, *hesperas*, *en hesperai*,<sup>Jdg.19:16-17</sup> Till sundown – *heohs deilehs*;<sup>1Sm.20:5</sup> before sunset – *hesperas* ...*dunontos tou hehliou*.<sup>1K.22:35-36</sup> When birds settle on land;<sup>Ex16:6, 12-13</sup> When Passover lamb slaughtered.]<sup>Refer Par. 5.1.1.6.4.10.6.2.</sup> **Cf. NT, Lk.24:29, Acts 28:23**

Why is the redemption from Egypt added to the creation motive in the Fourth Commandment? Because “the salvation of the Lord” literally occurred on the Seventh Day Sabbath. **The date of the 15th of the Second Month is given. The following days are “every day” numbered till “the Seventh” which is the Sabbath falling on the 21st.** Counting back, the 16th of the First Month (Abib or Nisan) fell on the **Seventh Day Sabbath**. On “this day” (see the scheme above) Israel was **“brought into the land”** God swore to give his people. He swore it,<sup>Ex.13:11</sup> that is, He accomplished it in his **Word, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was brought from the “deep” on the Sabbath Day** – Mt.28:1, 12:40 – by the excelling / exceeding greatness of his power which He worked when He raised Christ from the dead : Ephesians 1:11-12.

Calendar of First and Second Months

FIRST DAY Sunday	SECOND DAY Monday	THIRD DAY Tuesday	FOURTH DAY Wednesday	FIFTH DAY Thursday	SIXTH DAY Friday	SEVENTH DAY SABBATH
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

## 7.7.1.8.1.

**A Close Connection Between  
Prophecy and Eschatology**

18 November 2001

In my previous writing to you I said I must be a madman for Christ. That is how strange my own convictions at first appeared to me – for several years. So how much more should it look like madness to anyone else! Now it seems my madness didn't strike you!

No, my believing the Sabbath Day – creation-Sabbath, is not *another way of saying that Saturday the Seventh Day of the week is Sunday the First Day of the week*. I think because people think so is why they won't lend me an ear for a moment! No! I believe what my fellow-Calvinists label the "Jewish Sabbath".

I notice your interest in Prophecy. And I eagerly wait to having read your book. If the one Prophecy and Truth of history – Jesus' dying and rising from the dead, on which all Prophecy, time and history, past and future, rest – cannot be understood or believed, how could anyone believe Prophecy concerning the future? And why should one? If Prophecy is not fully come to fruition in Jesus Christ incarnate and glorified in resurrection from the dead, there is no coming to fruition of future Prophecy. Then the whole Bible is unbelievable and fatalism one's only option between attitudes towards the future. But on the other hand, if history is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, then the whole and all future is already known. Let the Arabs and the Americans do what they will, they won't steer history one degree off the course and off the aim God has set for it (from eternity had set for it) and which He already completely in and through Jesus Christ reached. "I am (Perfect!) ... the Alpha and the Omega!" Prophecy is God's Presence that pulls in both past and future of history. So I wouldn't be bothered too much about the future or predictions about the future even when explained from Scriptures.

I know a little bit about Seventh Day Adventist interpretation of Prophecy, and share quite a few points of opinion. But allow me to lift out one aspect of prophecy I find, I could almost say, totally, neglected in Seventh Day Adventist treatment on Prophecy. It is Jesus' resurrection from the dead as the realisation of Passover-Prophecy. SDA prophetic interpretation puts the emphasis on Jesus' crucifixion and Second Advent (apocalyptic). That of course is permissible and required for any serious attempt at understanding Prophecy. But again, if the real centre and axle of gravity is not given its full weight, all the (Ezekiel-)wheels of prophecy are going to get jammed for sure.

My personal interest in the Sabbath from within my position in Calvinistic Faith and persuasion, forced me to observe a certain relation and relationship between the Sabbath and ... yes, of all things, Prophecy! And I do not have "The Third Angel's Message" or "The Mark of the Beast" in mind.

Now I don't know how much more time and opportunity God will grant me here on earth to work on the subject He led me into and weighed upon me so heavily. So I will, definitely, not have the time to busy myself too much on any other subject of Scripture Teaching but the Sabbath. I must treat on any other subject only in so far as it might have bearing on the Sabbath. Time and energy – through the grace of God – I say, won't

permit anything more.

So let's talk about this thing I say I find almost totally missing in SDA-conception of Prophecy, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. But what would that have to do with the Sabbath, you might ask? Isn't it just "*a bare fact*" as SDA's are fond to express their appreciation of the relation between Sabbath and Jesus' resurrection? No! Jesus' resurrection from the dead has everything to do with the Sabbath Day! For does not Isaiah see the day of Christ where he speaks of the new earth and worship of the true God on the Sabbath Day? Isaiah sees the Christian era; he sees the day the preacher to the Hebrew Christian Community finds present already. That is Calvinistic theology or eschatology or prophetic interpretation – call it what you like. The preacher finds Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled and he finds it the very practice and duty of the Church of Jesus Christ! Hb.4:10. I'm not a Preterist, also not a millennialist; nor do I see the mark of the 144,000 in this. But I do see Prophecy come to realisation in this vision of Isaiah. I see a Christian Church keeping the Sabbath as the fulfilment of Bible Prophecy.

Now what is the Christian Church? It is "the People of God", Hb.4:9, who, according to Isaiah – but in the words of the preacher to the Hebrew Church – "because **Jesus** had given them rest", verse 8 – "do enter in into God's Rest" (*kata- / anapausis*), verse 3. They also have entered upon "a keeping of the Sabbath" (*sabbatizmos*), on strength of the fact that Jesus Christ "has Himself entered into His own Rest as did God from His work" (at creation, yes, but primarily here in Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead), verse 10. In other words, here is the Christian Church, "for this very reason" – *ara*, verse 9a, existing and living by the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, keeping the Sabbath day.

If by reason of Jesus' resurrection from the dead His Church keeps the Sabbath Day, should not the Day of Jesus' resurrection be the Sabbath? Well, I'll tell you, if the Church keeps or believes the Sabbath for any other reason, it's not Christian, and its practice of keeping the Sabbath for any other reason, isn't Faith – at least not "the Faith of Jesus"! (Rv.14:12) One must conclude, the Sabbath had to have been the Day on which Jesus rose from the dead!

Now Prophecy confirms the fact. The whole Bible may be seen as the story of Passover. And Passover is eschatology – is Prophecy, or absolutely and unreservedly has nothing to do with Jesus Christ! And if the Passover has nothing to do with Jesus Christ, the Bible is no more than Jewish legalism and myth. From the viewpoint of God's Covenant of Grace it could not be otherwise that the Christian Church would receive God's Sabbath Day and be guardian of it by virtue of Jesus' resurrection from the dead **ON, IT**. The Apostles clearly understood this truth and from this perception of theirs of the Passover, referred to the Day of

Jesus' resurrection from the dead as "according to the Scriptures the third day"! This is Passover Prophecy and the Sabbath's relation to and relationship with it! It may very literally be deduced from the story of Exodus. Refer Par. 5.1.1.6.1.3.1, -2, p. 73-76. Compare Edwards' Sermons, Part 4, p. 295 etc. Also the Daniel Prophecy, Par. 5.1.1.6.1.5.1, -2, p. 93-96. Absolutely literal "the third day", "according to the Scriptures" which is the Passover-Scriptures, the Story of Redemption the Bible Old and New Testament : 14 Nisan crucified, 15 Nisan buried and 16 Nisan resurrected from the dead See the Lamb of God as if slaughtered the Lion of Judah on a white horse conquering death and sin and hell and devil ... "in Sabbaths-time"! (Rv.5 et al)

When about fourteen Scriptures I think it is, say "the third day", they don't refer to Jonah's "three days and three nights", but to "the Scriptures" – general and essential ... wholistic. That is, to "**Passover-Scriptures**". (This is no reason to conclude contradiction between Jonah's statement and Passover-statements.)

Matthew 28:1 is the only Scripture that after its fulfilment in time in Christ, in so many words states and confirms the day and time of the Passover-Scriptures' fulfilment in the resurrection of Jesus "in Sabbath's-time". But not a single sentence or word of the New Testament contradicts this fact of reality and truth. In fact, the whole of the New Testament underscores the truth, reality and actuality of the coincidence of Sabbath and Jesus' resurrection "the third day according to" Passover Institution of "the Scriptures".

Translations and "Versions" of the Bible are **a conscious and laboured effort** to cover up this coincidence of time and day in fulfilment of Law and Grace. In other words, they are a conscious effort to deny fulfilment of Prophecy that confirms the Seventh Day Sabbath the Christian Day of Worship for it being Day of Jesus' resurrection.

Most difficult for my Calvinistic brethren to understand, is that Creation-Sabbath – Genesis 2 = Ex.20 = Passover-Sabbath – Dt.5 – that the Sabbath is **eschatological!** "God of the Seventh Day spoke", Hb.4:4 (Note how modern translations kill the truth and power of this text.), and He again "in these last days spoke to us in the Son ... Jesus who had given them rest ... and entered into His own rest (in rising from the dead) as did God from His (in finishing on the Seventh Day). To the utter confusion and dismay of my fellow-Calvinists I believe in the Resurrection-Sabbath, the Day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. I don't believe two Sabbath's. I believe the one Day of Rest that from the beginning was, and was created, ordained and destined, to be God's Day of Rest in Jesus Christ – **to be**, the Day of His resurrection.

The Sabbath I believe answers to the three main criteria of any conviction, practice or doctrine to be "Christian Faith" (Moltmann); or

"Christentum" "Christianity" (Barth). The first criterion is **Eschatology** (I like the simpler word, "Prophetic Word", or, as the New Testament phrases it, "(Faith) according to the Scriptures" – the whole of Scriptures is "Prophecy", is "Law". The second criterion is **Resurrection-Faith**. And the third, the signet, "Here is the elect's (saints') (long)-**suffering** that holds to the Law of the Faith of Jesus". (Not, "... also the Faith of Jesus" as if the Law and the Faith here supposed have man as its subject, and are the works of man; as if the Faith is not everything and only secondary. No, the copulative *kai* acts much stronger, and should be rendered, "indeed!" or not be mentioned, thus making both the Commandment and the Faith, that of Jesus – that upholds the elect.

It was "Jesus' Faith". "Jesus' Faith": in Him, was "God's Commandment". That Faith led Him to the cross. **That Faith as God's Law took Jesus to the tree** and He in and with Himself let it be nailed to the tree. (Read Klaas Schilder – the most inspired human word outside the Bible on the suffering of Christ!) God raised up from the dead again this One for the many, for whom "the Faith of Jesus indeed is the keeping of God's Commandment". In this Scripture I hear Jesus' word from the cross, "It is finished!" – God's predestination which includes Prophecy and history in Jesus Christ, is realised. In and with Himself, yea, as Himself, **Jesus' Faith obeyed Prophecy even in coming up from the dead**. "The suffering of Jesus", in fact leads to, and protrudes from, Law and Faith, because it was the FAITH THAT IS THE LAW OF THE SUFFERING OF OBEDIENCE that brought Christ to the Scriptures, Prophecy and Law. In that it was eschatology, His suffering in dying and hell carried him through death and the grave into resurrection and jubilation. The suffering of Jesus flows right through and forth from the cross and death and resurrection of the Suffering Servant to the "suffering of the elect ("saints")". Out from the truth and fountain of this Scripture Rv.14:12, **flows** John's conclusion, "Blessed are the dead who from now die in the Lord. (It is the "first resurrection", we Calvinists believe.) Yea, "Blessed are the dead who from now die in the Lord **that they might rest** from their labours" – that is, that they might be raised from the dead in and with Jesus Christ – before the second and eternal death strikes! The gist of Rv.14:12 is, **Jesus' Faith** – unto Himself being God's Commandment – **brings Him to and carries Him through suffering** in order to CONQUER AND MAKE THE LORD'S DAY. The Day the Psalm says is "of the Lord's making", is none but the Sabbath Day – none but the Day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The day of God's creation-Rest is the Day of the exceeding greatness of His Power when He raised Christ from the dead! It cannot be different days, never, in all eternity NOT. It is too great for that, being the Lord's Day that can be but one, the "Day concerning which God ... in these last days ... spoke ... to

us in the Son ... **in this wise**: **In resurrection from the dead** “God the Seventh Day rested”! (Hb.1:2 and 4:4) In the language of Rv.14:12 it means that a Sabbath which **simply** is “Law” and only the letter of a Commandment – Law that is not “the-Law-of-the-Faith-of-Jesus” – ‘*ganz und gar und restlos*’ has nothing to do with Christ! It is not, “the Everlasting Gospel”!

Do you believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? The disciples at first called it old women’s tales and anyone not sharing your Christian Faith will call you insane for believing it. It should be expected you must suffer being considered weak-minded for believing a Sabbath Day based on Jesus’ resurrection from the dead! The “Jews” – the legalists – will be first to cast stones on him who won’t believe their Sabbath, who actually desecrates it for believing this very same, Day and Sabbath Rest, belongs to Jesus the Christ!

Man’s keeping of the Sabbath and the Sabbath of the Lord may never be identified; Sabbath Day, and Sabbath Rest of God, must always stay two things, and man’s keeping of God’s Sabbath another. Because it is God’s Sabbath Rest and God’s Holy Day. For God’s People, the one Seventh Day, is the one Sabbath Day. It for them is the same day as the “Jewish Sabbath”, but not the same Sabbath. Only one of these Sabbaths, of the Jewish and the Christian, is Biblical. You will know which one. And then you will know how I can say creation-Sabbath is eschatological and had to have been Resurrection Day. I hope it clarifies both which Sabbath and Day I mean, and my position regarding it. It took me decades to get the perception focussed, the persuasion clear. Because it happened unwillingly, by force ... by the dictates of the Word of God and conscience. It amounts to this, I believe the Protestant Lord’s Day : “Day of the Victor” or more precisely the adjectival “The Lord-ly / Victor-ious Day” the divine honour of which was robbed by “The Lord Sun’s Day” and its champions, philosophers, tyrants **and ... translators!**

*“The Mithraic-Christian syncretism that was already gnawing at the vitals of the Roman church”*

Before I come to that: The phrase *mia tohn sabbatohn* occurs in the New Testament only for the-First-Day-of-the-week. The words making up the name, cut out and then isolated from being constituent and contextual elements of the unitary “*technical*” New Testament name for the day of Sunday, cannot be extrapolated – cannot be given extended and different meanings. Bacchiocchi (*The Sabbath in the New Testament*, depending on Liddell and Scott), depends on this misconception for his explanation of Galatians 4:10 and as a result fails to convince.

Now back to the reference above: Striking to me are your remarks, “*already*”, and “*Imported from Persia, it had begun to strike root in the*

*Roman world by the first century AD; by the second it was flourishing*”. Herein lies the answer to Galatians 4:10; not in spoiling the meaning of words. Paul supposes and directly refers to **paganism** and its **idolatry** that right at the **start** of Christian history tried to make its inroads into the pure Faith. I could repeat several of your remarks that support this conclusion. Sunday did not appear suddenly and Justin not long after Paul strategically applied its accepted – be it heathen – “observation”, to “*beguile*” = “*enthral*” Christians. While flattering the Caesar he “dissuades” (KJ) the Church. Justin was the first person we know of to have done so. Not necessarily the “*educated people*”, but specifically the Galatian Christians were “*unable to turn their backs on the prevalent culture and tried to preserve as much as possible of it (their “heathen”, “Greco-Roman heritage”)*”. (We don’t read about this problem again in the New Testament or do we? Definitely not in Colossians 2:16 and Romans 14:5, 6.) So the Galatians turned their backs on the Gospel! “*Theological liberalism and an ecumenical spirit caused them to take the final step of syncretism: mixing Bible religion with heathen elements*”. Paul called the spade a spade and said the Galatians were returning to their “no-gods” or idols of their previous status in paganism. They turned back to more than statues and icons. As you have pointed out, Paul “*did not drool or dawdle over images of the gods ... instead “his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols” He knew what emptiness and evil lurked beneath ...*”. The Galatian Christian converts turned back to “the weak and beggarly principles of the world”, *i.e.*, to “philosophy” as a religion. You identify some of the “principles”, like asceticism. Paul vented his *provocation* in desperation, “I have laboured in vain for your sakes! ... You are cut off from Christ!”

Paul’s reference to the “observation of days etc,” is then a reference to PAGAN “days”, and Justin refers to the chief of these, “The Sun’s Day”. BY TWISTING CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES he actually INTRODUCES PAGAN MYTH INTO IT to justify Christianity in the eyes of the emperor. Today the same method is still used to convince gullible Christians of the (heathen and secret) foundation of the observance of Sunday. Sunday originally gained its foot hold in the Christian Church for exactly the same reason and by the very same instrument it has held on to that foot hold ever since – the **MANIPULATION OF THE SCRIPTURES** and the simple faith of good people! But verily for the Protestant spirit of Calvinism such fraud could not go on undiscovered for ever. Calvin himself tried to put together the four Gospels – but had to give up because he could not reconcile the many discrepancies in the Gospels **that are the direct result of the Sunday-resurrection presupposition!** That is a fact little realised for its importance for the course the Reformation took. Barth

viewed Calvin as the only real maker of the new beginning that was the Reformation. (*Letzte Zeugnisse*, EVZ-Verlag, Zürich, 1969, p. 67, "*Das Charisma gyberneseos, die 'Gnadengabe der Leitung' macht sich dann (in dem Aufbrechen) geltend. In den alttestamentlichen Auszugsgeschichten war der sagemumwitterte Mose, in der Reformationszeit war Calvin (im Unterschied zu Luther und zu Zwingli) ein klassischer Träger dieses Charismas (von einem mehr oder weniger disziplinierten Geschehen (des Aufbrechen der Kirche).*") And I fully agree. Could Calvin have discerned these implications he would also have been the leader of the exodus from Sunday into the new land of the Seventh Day Sabbath of the Bible and consequently of Christianity.

An interesting and meaningful fact is this, that I wrote on my book over twenty five years **when for the first time** I took Justin under scrutiny in the **original**, and also the modern Greek. **Long before**, I formulated the arguments of Paragraphs such as 5.3.2.3.2.1 p. 60, 5.3.2.5.3, page 102, 5.3.3.4.3.2, p. 155 of Part Two, etc. Not because I am clever, but by force of all true facts and implications, I as it were **anticipated** what I discovered in these two "versions" of Mt.28:1 – that the grammatical and syntactical factors of the text were **switched about** in order to arrive at the desired meanings essential for a Sunday-resurrection. This is, as Emil Brunner would have said, dishonest! To call the rejection of such methods and the insistence on **only correct** translation and interpretation, "*hair-splitting*", does not solve the problem. Dear Mr de Kock, I plead with you to come to grips with these questions with the courage of your Christian conviction. It usually takes ages for the post to arrive, so I advise you look up *Lord's Day* in the Heritage Library of La Sierra University, or at Andrews University, or contact Prof. Webster who has a copy of his own. These are all rather old. You will receive a revised edition in quality hard bind.

#### 7.7.1.8.2.

#### A Close Connection Between Theology and Christology

Dear Mr. De Kock

I beg your pardon for having miss spelled your surname. It must have been my Afrikaans – or no excuses, pure negligence on my part.

Second. I promised you a revised edition in quality hard bind of *The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace*. In Afrikaans we say, plenty water walked into the sea in the time between. Instead of the books then, kindly accept what I think you would have preferred to 1,400 pages of bulk – a CD! To mention but two advantages for the reader: He can have

before him print the size of a tennis ball per letter if needed; He can trace certain words or phrases instantly from the beginning to the end or sporadically. And it costs me, one twentieth of what the books cost, while also the cost of postage cannot be compared.

Herewith included please accept the book in CD format and may it be to you an enrichment not only in knowledge and understanding, but mostly and firstly an enrichment in your standing in the Faith of Jesus!

You will notice an Addendum of Current Discussion – rather one-sided – with Prof. John Webster on Moltmann's *God in Creation*. I also present a thesis on the first Creation Sabbath. I'll be most thankful for your sharing the conversation. What is acutely relevant in this discussion is the relation: Creation God's sinless creation and Man's fall and Sabbath Day – and the juxtaposition of the so-called first and second creation stories. You will discover approaches to the question you haven't thought possible.

Nothing is as fatiguing as to try one's hand at theology. Even the mighty Barth yearned for a moment's relaxation from the hard task-master that theology is. I won't say I am a theologian – first, because I'm not one and I'm not trying to be one; second, what I have done in the field of biblical thought is not theological and is not of a quality that could be good enough to qualify as theology. Let me rather say then, nothing is as fatiguing, as tiresome, as to study theology. But even to say that is not correct. Because I find it constructive, engaging and refreshing to study living theology like that of a Calvin, of the puritans or of a Spurgeon – and of course Barth! In the last analysis, one should say it is exhausting to study the theology of the worldly wise men – especially of our present age. I may not say they are so tedious because they have no experience of true and living theology, for who am I to say so. But, I often find their theological experience as it finds expression in their work of theologising not edifying or inspiring. Then why not leave the hard work for the strong? Two reasons why not: First, I don't know how to describe it, but I am compelled to. Is it God who forces me? I believe so. Then that is enough reason to take up my small hammer and chisel of the word (N.P. van Wyk Louw) and form the mountain-sized sculpture. Second, The glory of God is the strength and the prize of my life. Jesus Christ is my satisfaction. I won't let Him be taken away from me – not even by my own incompetence. I shall, because I am constrained by his love, serve the glory of Christ. The third reason: There has never been an attempt made to theologically look at the Sabbath Day. It has always been from a viewpoint of creation and or the law. Man has always occupied the central position – the Sabbath in fact has become "Sabbath-keeping". The Sabbath as its doctrine and keeping has always been void of Jesus Christ. Such a Sabbath does not belong in Christian Faith.



I am constrained to take up the challenge.

Theology always forces one to apply the standards of the Scriptures. Away with theology that is not subjected to the authority of the Scriptures! Theology that is not ruled and overruled by the Scriptures is not theology. One sentence from the Bible nullifies my whole attempt at theology. If mine differs with the Bible's word, it is cancelled and obliterated; and if mine agrees with the Bible's word, then only the Bible's remain and mine is past, forgotten and as if never said. So authoritative must the Bible be for theology. Why then still practice theology? Only because it should be the proclaiming of the Gospel!

Theology – What it is NOT: “... theology which ... reduces God to language in the inadequate material of this world which is imprisoned in futility”. (p. 65) Theology cannot handle God.

Theology cannot speak to God as if He can be approached and persuaded to our opinions. That would also “reduce God” to our level.

Theology is our speaking of God, our contemplations about Him – on one condition, it is not abstractly and without relationship. For that would reduce God to below our level.

Theology is our speaking – our “logic” about God within the only relationship wherein He is God – where He is the “Highest” – and that is where we speak about God in the relationship of prayer and adoration; where God is for us our God, Creator and Saviour.

Theology is: *theology which ... reduces our knowledge, thinking and wisdom and feeling about God “to language in the inadequate material of this world which is imprisoned in futility”*. (p.65)

Jürgen Moltmann is both fatiguing and fascinating. His theology is enigmatic – to me in any case. Take for example one of the most basic Protestant doctrines – a doctrine that influences one's perceptions of about every other article of Christian Faith – the nature of sin (Ch. 9 § 4, p. 229f). I find Moltmann's idea of sin irreconcilable with sin's “traditional” Christian understanding. This doctrine – the understanding of sin and its nature – is basic especially for one's understanding of the Sabbath. Not for Moltmann though. Moltmann refers to the result of Adam's fall according to Protestant belief in the above mentioned paragraph. His own explanation practically nullifies any fall and any sin and correspondingly nullifies the need of a Saviour. His view of sin lends itself to ecumenism such as Knitter would propagate. “Sin can merely pervert something which God has created, but cannot destroy it. Sin is the perversion of the human being's relationship to (Not “with”?) God, not its loss. The relationship (Not “relation”?) to God is turned into idolatry ... even the service of idols is a relationship to God ...”. (My German copy is on order.) God created life, and sin cannot destroy it? No. It is not what the Bible teaches.

You would have noticed that my views on the problem do not always agree with tradition. But that is mostly where I make my **inferences** from certain traditionally accepted basics. I abide to the **basics**. I quoted Flavel (on the CD) who appeals to scholastic fathers and others for believing Adam fell in sin on his first day. The Protestant view (Flacius Illyricus) sees the (total) loss of the *imago Dei*. Then the Protestant view sees the repairing of the lost estate to its original owner first in the Christian Faith and in the Christian era. (As Moltmann points out.) I ask the Reformers, were not all ‘Old Testament’ believers also justified? And were they not justified in Jesus Christ? Were they not justified by faith as well? And Adam the first man? Is salvation dispensational? No, “there is no other Name”.

Then here comes an application of the Sabbath Day not seen by any theologian I know of. For “there is no other Name” for Adam too. Moltmann definitely doesn't perceive it, otherwise he would have ‘capitalised’ on it. True to the tenure of his theology of the Sabbath, Moltmann would never have capitalised on this even had he perceived what is coming. Because the Sabbath that is coming here, destroys his whole scheme.

Now I can go back to Moltmann and quote passage after passage that will confirm what I am saying. Let us for now restrict ourselves to Chapter 9 of *God in Creation*.

### 7.7.1.8.3.

#### **A Close Connection Between the Beginning and the End**

“*God in Creation ... an ecological doctrine of creation*”. (Is it possible? Does Moltmann succeed?) , Chpt. 9, *God's Image in Creation: Man*, paragraph 2, p. 225 ff,

“The true likeness of God is to be found, not at the beginning of God's history with mankind, but at its end; and as goal it is present in that beginning and during every moment of that history.”

A wonderful thought – with a wonderful flaw. This will reveal the flaw: *The true likeness of God is to be found, not at the beginning of God's history with mankind, but in Jesus Christ; and as its goal, Jesus Christ is present in that beginning and during every moment of that history.*

To say, *The true likeness of God is to be found at the end of God's history with mankind*, is to place the *true likeness of God* in man's history, and in man himself and not in Jesus Christ. (Moltmann does see God's image in man in his own and novel way, which comes down to man as the whole and undivided human race. (“*human totality*”; “*the human being's whole existence*”; “*the true human community*”; “*humanity as it is bound up with nature*”, p. 221)

But what has this to do with what I said above, that the relevance and involvement in the beginning of the *imago Dei* and its opposite, sin, have certain consequences for one's views of the Sabbath? Exactly this: **Christ Jesus** is to be found at the beginning of God's history with mankind. **Jesus Christ** was its goal, **Jesus Christ** as its goal, is present in that beginning and during every moment of that history. Can you be persuaded differently? I cannot see how.

Now if that is true – and it is true – grace is present in the beginning of creation, even before man – Adam – fell into sin and out of grace. Moltmann of course doesn't agree with man forfeiting grace completely. (p. 233 middle) But what is grace if it is not free? I won't go into this point now. Many massive volumes have been written on what is inferred on this one page. Just think of Moltmann's own conclusion that not man but the Sabbath is the crown of God's creation – then how can man be the *imago Dei*? It is impossible to find an answer to the riddle unless Grace is conceived of as present and ruling before sin had been realised in act of disobedience. If we only know the revealed history of Adam before history, he sinned even before God had finished speaking to him, so to speak. Then we cannot find the image of God in man – not even marred – but destroyed. Then we have no explanation for sin and sin remains sin – that thing whereby man forfeits life and the *imago Dei* completely! (Contrary to Moltmann, p. 233, last par. for example.) **Man is God's image only in so far as he through and by the grace and mercy of God carries immortality – which is possible only in and through Jesus Christ by faith.** So by faith only is man the image of God. Adam's second breath was by the grace of God and must "the completion of the imago Dei" NOT "be found at the end of God's history with man" but already at its beginning – in Christ and not in man; because of faith, that is.

Then God for Adam's sake, created a **New Day**. God could not rest unless and until he has created a new day – a Seventh Day – wherein to exercise his mercies. God created his day – the day for himself – in order for himself to be "relieved" (p. ) of his pain because of Adam's sin. God did not have to be "relieved" of His works; on the contrary, he had to be "relieved" by no less than His works. In order for God to be "relieved" of sin ... in order to rediscover the *imago Dei*, God rested and was refreshed in this: "Thou art my only begotten Son in whom I am well pleased". In order for God to be "relieved" of sin ... in order for Christ to fulfil God's plan of salvation and creation, says He, "Let us make man". "Let us make man" implies Christ involved in creating man. In order for God to be "relieved" of sin ... in order for Christ to fulfil God's plan of salvation, says He, "God rested". God's creation – his creating act – implies Christ involved in redeeming man. Christ as goal is present in that beginning.

God sees Adam and rejoices because He sees him in Christ under the dispensation of Grace and the everlasting Covenant ... on the first Sabbath Day of God's creation. (How completely irreconcilable is Moltmann's explanation of man's evolution with this view! p. 203 before and after. What other answer than **Christ** in creation can Faith offer the claims of evolution?)

Says Moltmann on p. 217, "Man comes into being, not through God's creative word but out of his special resolve. The word which precedes the resolve is addressed by God to himself. It is a self-exhortation. In a resolve, the author of the resolve acts on himself first of all." True, but Moltmann speaks only of half of God's creating activity. He does not keep reckoning of God's resolve to show mercy. Man comes into being, not through God's creative **word**, only; not out of his special **resolve**, to create man, only. **But**, man comes into being by God's Resolve **and** Word of **Grace** which precedes and **accompanies** the Resolve and Word that creates. (I use the singular for it is God who thus acts.) God who acts on himself, addresses his Resolve and Word of **Grace** to himself first of all. That means one thing and one thing only: God acts on creation and addresses creation through and in Christ as Creator of creation and its Mediator. ("Genesis" does not so much indicate a **document** of Priestly origin as it indicates a **creation** of Priestly origin.) The Power of God acts "to us-ward" or He acts not at all – not even on himself! We are thus bold in this our conviction to even speak as if we could see inside God Himself – we are thus sure of God's resolve and Word of grace in Christ Jesus! God's "first" energy simultaneously operates within Himself and from within Himself towards man and on man. I cannot believe in an evolutionary process that puts stops within God's creating activity – between resolve and creation of a cosmos, between cosmos and life, between life and man, and between man and the salvation of man and the cosmos – "parts giving rise to a whole" as Moltmann claims. ("In six days God created: heavens and earth; and the Seventh Day rested" – with a very close connection between the Sixth and Seventh Days, "between the day of man and the day of God". (Pope John Paul 2) Moltmann puts the final division between creation and redemption, and he puts the Sabbath with the first, creation, and Sunday with the last, redemption. No! The Sabbath only belongs to the whole – the first and last whole! The Sabbath belongs to its Lord – to the Alpha and the Omega! The Sabbath belongs as much with and to creation as it belongs with and to redemption (or re-created creation).

Says Moltmann, "... the miracle of (the Redemption) of the Red Sea and the miracle of creation ... a single vista"; "Paul gathers into one perspective the justification of the sinner, the raising of the dead, and

creation out of nothing. The beginning of the world and its consummation are both inherent in the present experience of justification ...". (Emphasis CGE) I may only add, The justification of the world and its consummation are both inherent **in its creation**. And the creation of the world as well as its consummation are inherent in the centre and heart of life and being – in Jesus Christ crucified, buried and raised from the dead. God is omnipresent in terms of time as He is omnipresent in terms of space. He is the everlasting God; but God is not God but as the acting God – and but as the God acting in Jesus Christ – eternally! Moltmann's whole scope is telescopic – evolutionary. (I prefer evolutionary to evolutionary.) The Genesis scope is eschatological – while seeing the future and the end it sees the present, the above and the down at once. The Genesis scope is spheric, like the ovum inside an egg, visualised as lying in the centre. Eventually all the yoke around it lands up inside!

Creation is about more than creation; it is about more than the redemption of creation and the forgiveness of man's sin. The creation of man is God's answer to sin and to the instigator of sin, the devil. Not as an afterthought or the innovation of an emergency measure. **It is the working out of God's pre-determinate will and mind unto his own glory – unto Jesus Christ who is the *imago Dei*.**

Then we know what happened because of Adam's sin: "the Sabbath was made for man – not man for the Sabbath" ! Here is an application of the Sabbath doctrine not seen by any theologian I know of. I really hope there are who have noticed it. Or is it not noticeable; does it not exist? Do I invent it? Please show me if I do. What does it mean what Moltmann says, that not man, but the Sabbath, is the crown of God's creation? I know he doesn't mean what I mean, but his words do sound applicable.

Nevertheless, I love the scenario of a creation wherein Grace came first and reigned until now. I rejoice in creation for I find my Redeemer there – Adam's Redeemer. He, present, permeating creation, gives it that fragrance God relishes in. It is He, Christ, whom that Spirit of which Moltmann speaks, reveals in creation. It is Christ supreme and sweet! Lapsarians and supralapsarians ... are so bone dry dogmatic. This I know, man was created to both live and be saved by grace alone! The Sabbath teaches me that. The Sabbath does have some meaning!

All this on four little lines of Moltmann.

#### 7.7.1.8.4.

##### **A Close Connection Between Genesis One and Two**

It was a hot – hot! – Sixth Day. There was no man to protect and cultivate the earth – he forsook his post. So the earth was in an ecological crisis – immediately. God's very good works the Sixth Day across the span of the earth bewailed man's fall but with God entered upon the Seventh Day and was refreshed. A life-giving water emerged from below, the story tells. In Genesis 2 one reads of an earth that was moistened with the waters of mercy – it came up from the earth as would once the Fountain of eternal Waters of Life. Is this allegory, or is this the "sign between Me and the children of Israel – for "on the Seventh Day the LORD ... was refreshed"? (Ex.31:16-17) I think it speaks here of the Sabbath rest of God. Man because of unbelief did not enter in. And God swore he would not. God swore it of his People – of Adam and Eve. God swore it which implies God spoke in Jesus Christ. And that implies his mercy in his oath. The earth's destiny was wound up with Adam's and Adam's was wound up with the destiny of Christ. Creation's redemption awaited the redemption of man. The creation awaits Jesus Christ.

I don't think Moltmann realises this. I get the feeling Moltmann awaits man's redemption in the redemption of the creation. To treat on ecology in the context of theology without immediate and total dependence on Christ to me seems a futile attempt. That is what I mean by Christology – theology cannot be true theology without immediate speaking of God in his Self-Revelation which is Jesus Christ. That immediacy implies grace and redemption through and in none other than Christ already in the history of The Beginning. Creation being God's creation implies the Covenant of Grace. Otherwise we just repeat the deism of the theologians of the nineteenth century and shall end up with an evolutionary origin and future of creation and man (and a present-day theology of doubt, like Knitter's in the name of ecumenism).

How can we speak of God – Theology – but by virtue of his Self-revelation – Christology? How can we speak of the Creator and the creation other than as the Redeemer and the redeemed? An ecological theology that is not Christ-centred cannot be good theology. An ecological theology that is anthropo-centric – like Moltmann's – is self-centred and without hope. Moltmann even wrote that famous book *The Theology of Hope* – that was quickly seized by revolutionaries. Which makes me wonder why. Where does the hope lie of a creation that is confronted by its own disastrous end? Creation's only hope lies in the Salvation meant for fallen man – not for improved man! Creation's redemption lies in the preaching and the witnessing to this Jesus whom you – wretched man, wretched creation – crucified but God raised from the dead. Is the earth and the world and the cosmos saved from hell?

Then it is saved from hell by its Redeemer-Creator! (Note the order.) Creation's destiny is wrapped up in man's; man's is wrapped up in Christ's. This is not to return to an anthropo-centric theology (creation redeemed by creation), but this is a return to a Christological, to a Christ-centred theology where the redemption of man and of creation – man representing creation – is contained in the Creator – in Himself representing both creation and man. A Christological approach to an ecological theology must find Christ's First, Second, and Last Advent of fundamental importance. In the middle stands the Resurrected Man, and in Him the created man resurrected, and the new creation.

You have asked what I mean with theology and what with Christology. Theology and Christology are disciplines of Church Dogmatics. Both have their own theory. That is not all. Dogmatics should test proclamation but at the same time should be proclamation. Theology not only is thought or talk about God – it is witness to God; proclamation of God. In order to do this, one needs Christology – the thought or talk about Christ that also is the witness to and proclamation of Christ – which enables one to think and talk about God. (Otherwise, for example, the Jews' worst theology must be better than the best of Christian theology.)

Neither Theology nor Christology should be purely academic disciplines. Only as a believer, as a person who is personally and subjectively addressed by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit – only as the Church – could one's speaking of God and Christ and Spirit have meaning – could one's speaking be of value better than that of philosophy; is one's thesis not just surmising. Academically one might reason any which way the textbooks prohibit, and yet speak of God or Christ truly. And vice versa. By this I mean commitment to Christ's Body the Church. To speak abstractly, disengaged, theoretically merely, whether by correct formula and versed in the art or not, is not to practice true theology. The more so when it comes to practical Christology. Both theology and Christology should be proclamation. Both are possible only in the sphere of Christ's Church. It cannot be an abstract science merely. It must be a living Truth that has power to convince and persuade and confirm and encourage in the Faith ... in the Faith that saves. True theology is the preaching of Christ. True theology changes a man's life and thus **becomes**, Christology as well as **is** it, from the outset. True theology is preaching – then the hearing of preaching begets faith (Pneumatology): The hearing too is theology and Christology. Then faith begets the Body that is Christ's, the Church (Ecclesiology). Living Theology ends up being Ecclesiology. But I do not want to busy myself in this Paragraph of *The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace* with the dogmatic distinction between Theology and Christology.

Although three more paragraphs follow on Paragraph 7.7, they are not the book's last. Part Five, that is, Paragraphs 9 and 10, I had finished even before Paul – Part Four (Par. 8). Paragraphs 9 and 10 still exist only in Afrikaans. It now seems to be besides the point – irrelevant. It deals with the Second Century. In fact, I wrote Paragraph 8 (Paul) fifteen years ago and revised it – actually re-wrote it recently – and from it originated the idea of a **doxology** for Par. 7.7. (Colossians 2!) So Paragraph 7.7 is the culmination to *The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace*, and I should have a clear purpose for it. Its purpose is not a criticism of Moltmann! Doxology encompasses creation – the cosmos. I consider Moltmann to this end and must make something positive of his theology of creation for this purpose. Nothing else and nothing less than a doxology can do for this Paragraph. Therefore let it be Theology, Christology, Pneumatology, Ecclesiology, Soteriology, Cosmology – it must be Doxology. Being a doxology and being about the Sabbath this Paragraph inevitably looks at man and creation – it must look at God's cosmos so wide in praise of Him through Jesus Christ its Re-Creator. (Psalm 19!)

What in the first place practically put me on the track of writing this Paragraph was that sense of incompleteness, inferiority and lack of persuasive power about my whole endeavour in *The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace*. I found very little Grace, very little Spirit, very little My Lord and my God Lord Jesus, there. My spiritual ineptness, the technicalities I busied myself with for hundreds of pages – these are things that do not inspire, or lead to Jesus. Then one day I picked up a little book which I had read about two decades before but could not make a thing of. I'm certain you don't know of its existence because only a few copies were printed, and in Afrikaans. It is the doctoral thesis of Philippus Francois Theron, *Die Ekklesia as Kosmies Eskatologiese Teken*. Few books had such a changing influence on my "theological" thinking. At the beginning it was Barth's *Dogmatik im Grundriss*. Then his *KD*. And later the nuclear bomb that explodes inside one's rib case and skull – Klaas Schilder's *Trilogie, Christus in Zijn Lijden*. Then little by little the Puritans introduced themselves to me and I was carried off. I still want do a very condensed digest of the Puritans according to subject matter. That is the background against which I want this Paragraph defined. **It must sound the advantage of Jesus Christ from the perspective of the doctrine of the Sabbath Day** ... it must be about *The Sabbath as Cosmic Eschatological Sign*! I don't want to create something that is not already; that is not true. This must originate and flow from the Good News of Jesus Christ. It must only present and elevate what already is living and life-giving Truth. Now I thought that this should be the easiest Paragraph because its subject matter is so positive, solid and constructive. But I have postponed every time I sat down to start because I there and then

discovered, this is not going to be that easy! Its prospects and potentialities are too overwhelming! But now at last I must begin. I ask for your direction, help, encouragement and criticism. I won't be able to find it with my Sunday-heroes – you see how Moltmann disappoints. I must turn to a Sabbath-believer of insight and I know of nobody better equipped to help me than you. This will depend entirely on your free and unselfish agreement. I cannot compensate you but by my gratitude and perhaps a moment's thought that might be to the praise of God.

(The above wish in the end proved vain.)

#### 7.7.1.8.5.

##### A Close Connection Between Sixth and Seventh Days

Can one say man sinned his first day of perfect and sinless creation?

*“As the seventh day blessed and consecrated by God, the “shabbat” concludes the whole work of creation, and is therefore immediately linked to the work of the sixth day when God made man “in his image and likeness” (cf. Gn 1:26). This very close connection between the “day of God” and the “day of man” did not escape the Fathers in their meditation on the biblical creation story. Saint Ambrose says in this regard:*

*“Thanks, then, to the Lord our God who accomplished **a work in which he might find rest. He made the heavens, but I do not read that he found rest there; he made the stars, the moon, the sun, and neither do I read that he found rest in them. I read instead that he made man and that then he rested, finding in man one to whom he could offer the forgiveness of sins**”. Thus there will be for ever a direct link between the “day of God” and the “day of man” ...”.* Pope John Paul 2. (Emphasis CGE)

God did not rest the Sixth Day – He rested the Seventh Day. And He rested after **“finding in man one to whom he could offer the forgiveness of sins”** – according to Ambrose. There indeed is this connection between these two days – the connection of God's act of work: acting in **his Rest of forgiveness** on the Seventh Day! Then the Pope writes about these two days of the week while he intends to motivate Sunday observance?!

*“He (God) made man and ... then he rested”, says Ambrose while he supposes God rested in Adam being perfect and sinless. But God did not rest the Sixth Day. “Then he rested, finding in man one to whom he could offer the forgiveness of sins”. God found reason for forgiveness in man – He found man a sinner in need of forgiveness. “God rested, finding in man one to whom he could offer the forgiveness of sins”. “God rested” – He worked the forgiveness of man's sin on the Sabbath Day. That was God's rest of the Sabbath Day – His work through Jesus Christ. It means man was a sinner by Sabbath's time. It supposes God rested because He*

found One whom He could offer the forgiveness of sins because that One earned forgiveness by the giving of Himself a Ransom for many.

I know Ambrose did not mean it like this, though I am sure the story of Genesis means it like this and that Ambrose should have meant it like this. *God made the heavens, I do not read that he found rest there; He made the stars, the moon, and the sun, I do not read that he found rest in them; He made man – and neither do I read that he found rest in man. But, the Lord our God accomplished **a work of his own in which he might find rest – the forgiveness of sin “for man”** – “and then he rested”*. In finding A Man, The One to whom he could offer the forgiveness of sins, God rested – and blessed and consecrated the Seventh Day *“for that reason”*. Could it be that God finished all his works He had made, without mercy, without Christ? It is not God's Sabbath Day that does not depend on God's Sabbath Rest.

I think Moltmann's *“Sabbath-talk”* – your phrase where you refer to Barth's sudden stammering at last – doesn't mean much. Moltmann's stammering doesn't come suddenly or at last. All his talk about the creation Sabbath is stammering because it does not find Christ, flow from Him or reach Him. Where is an uttering of Moltmann about the creation Sabbath that is **prompted by the consideration of Christ?**

*“It is not for nothing that the church looks upon the day of the Christian feast of the resurrection as ‘the first day’ of the week. Every week is set within the vision of the new creation, and is begun in the hope of resurrection and eternal life. After all, although the Sabbath of creation was the seventh day for God, for man that was created on the sixth day, it was the first day they experienced”* as *“human beings”*.

In view of Moltmann's purpose – to justify Christian keeping of the Sunday – his reference to creation Sabbath is unnecessary and irrelevant. More important though is that he does not seize at the potentialities and contingencies of the Sabbath Day.

Although the Sabbath of creation *week* for God was the seventh day, for *Adam and Eve, who were created on the sixth day, the Sabbath was their first day they, with their vision set on the new creation, could experience the beginning of their weeks* in the hope of resurrection and eternal life. There was no other possibility from within which to continue with life – not for a single second! Without the promise and guarantee of *the new creation* in the hope of resurrection and eternal life Adam and Eve on the Seventh Day would have been dead sinners – not saved sinners. The Sabbath was the first day they – **by grace** – experienced **mercy**. They did not die but were driven out **because One stood in for them** that was both God and man. In Him they were returned to Eden and Paradise already; in Him they communed with God their Creator. Through Him in resurrection in the last day they would return again. Man

lived by faith from the beginning. Adam lived by the Christian Faith – Resurrection Faith! Life and death, mercy and sin, and Christ born in the flesh, risen in glory and coming again, were the one reason for the first Seventh Day of God’s creating act. The connection between the “day of God” and the “day of man” is very *close*! Man should remember the Day of God for what He on it did “for the sake of man”. And for the sake of creation – creation represented by man and presented before God, in man.

It always brings me to two things I look for in Moltmann’s Sabbath-talk – man’s fall and sin; and Christ’s Second Coming and judgement – only to find them virtually non-existent there.

#### 7.7.1.9.1.

##### **A Huge Difference**

Tyndale said, I Take God and the Church as witness to remove my part in Christ if I started a sect. And I have no idea to tear God’s Body apart further than it is. But God take away my part in Christ if I don’t honour and proclaim Him in everything I write – except I do so unawares, in which case I pray his forgiveness and to show me my error.

I should rejoice in the difficulties I face in this matter because it is a Christian’s highest enjoyment and privilege to fill up the suffering of Christ as Paul says. Nevertheless it is a pity what Christians forfeit they being unable to distinguish what is implied. On the one hand I may be a Christian who for the honour that belongs to Christ keeps the Lord’s Day with the Jews in honour of and subjection to the Law. On the other hand I may be a Christian who for the honour that belongs to Christ keeps the Lord’s Day with the pagans in honour of and subjection to the Lie. Which of the two is preferred? Neither! I consider my cross lighter than either alternatives. I would be most thankful if at my grave it may be said like it was of Barth, that he was a happy man. I choose for the honour that belongs to Christ in resurrection from the dead, to keep the Lord’s Day with the Church of all ages, and for that reason to keep it on the Sabbath the Seventh Day in honour of

Christ and in subjection to his Lordship.

I gave Moltmann a great deal of thought the past few days, and this morning suddenly realised what I find is the problem with his theology. As I read the fourth paragraph of Chapter 3, it dawned on me! His linear and evolutionary illustration of creation, history and God’s revelation is the cause of it. I have before emphasised his neglect and virtual denial of sin and Christ’s second Advent. But that is the flaw of his theology wrongly emphasised. These are but the symptoms of its real weakness.

“For Paul, the raising of the crucified Jesus is the beginning of the End-time process of the raising of the dead, and with that

(process), the new creation of the world. Out of the perfect tense of Jesus’ resurrection, he (Paul) justifies the future of this hope frequently ... . If eternal life has appeared in the raising of Jesus, then the living energy is manifested in the presence of his Spirit. Mortal bodies will finally be made to live when the resurrection life overcomes, not merely sin, but death as well. In 1 Cor.15:20-24, Paul sees this process in a particular temporal order: first of all Christ; - then – at his coming – those who belong to Christ; and then the end. (See Moltmann’s *Das Kommen Gottes*) He uses the words *apartheh* and *arrabohn* to describe this process as a process of successive anticipations, where in each given case the parts stand for the whole, as beginnings pointing towards the completion. ... faith in the resurrection is therefor the Christian form of belief in creation. It is belief in creation under the conditions of this life, which is subject to death.”

No wonder it is so fatiguing to study theology, for Moltmann scarcely leaves one article of (traditional) Christian belief intact! Worst is, “faith in the resurrection as the Christian form of belief in creation ... is belief in creation under the conditions of this life, which is subject to death”! That is not Christian Faith – not Resurrection Faith! How opposite of Paul’s illustration is Moltmann’s! Where is the eventfulness of Paul’s – “the dead shall be raised”? Where the momentousness of Paul’s – “in the twinkling of an eye”?

For Moltmann no dead are raised, but living yet mortal bodies in “the end” obtain immortality; the dead are not raised out of death and dust and instantly, but through an “end-time process” “is belief in creation under the conditions of this life, which is subject to death”! The present Christian era is not the Kingdom of heaven already present and real, but only “a process of anticipation” – of the next which is not entered instantly through resurrection from the dead, but is consummated gradually “towards the completion”. “His (Christ’s) coming” is no literal arrival from heaven with the sound of trumpet, but the “subjective approach to the objective process of the new creation of the world which will make it the kingdom of the eternal God”. Christ’s advent is no sudden appearance like lightning of an hour and day no ones knows, but “when the resurrection life overcomes not merely sin, but death as well”. *Et cetera.*

And all this because of Moltmann’s under-valuation of the central moment of his linear and evolutionary “processes”, “the resurrection of the crucified”! What says Moltmann of this that in Christian “tradition” is an event – a phenomenon of singular yet absolute reality? Says he, “The raising of the crucified Jesus is the beginning of the End-time process of the raising of the dead. ... If eternal life has appeared in the raising of Jesus, then ... out of the perfect tense of Jesus’

*resurrection ... the living energy is manifested in the presence of his Spirit*". The *manifestation* of Jesus' own resurrection vaporises into the *presence of his Spirit*. For Moltmann **the actual past event** of the "*perfect tense of Jesus' resurrection*" exists in its resultant present continuation **only**. He actually has no right to even speak of Christ's Spirit if that Spirit implies "*the faith in the resurrection*" but not the **physical fact** that Jesus "came in the flesh" as John says. While Moltmann so stresses the Resurrection as basis of the Christian Faith, he dilutes it so it vaporises into "spirit" merely. Or rather, more in line with his own thinking, Jesus' incarnation belongs to creation and Israel's history, not with the new creation. As pointed out before, history ends with Jesus' death and what starts with his resurrection no longer is history – no longer is reality.

*"The New Testament testimony about creation is to be found in the resurrection kerygma and in the experience of the Holy Spirit who is the energy of the new creation"*. Problem is, Moltmann has reservations as to the **presence** of the new creation and the Spirit – they may only be expected in the dispensation of the "*messianic era*"! The new creation cannot be found in the era of "*the dominium terrae*" and (Jewish) history. "*Eschatological christology and pneumatology ... involve a fundamentally new interpretation of the divine creative activity*". "*The divine creative activity*" is another thing than the creating deed of God through which creation as nature came into being. What actually then causes the difference between God's creating deed that brought about the *dominium terrae* and "*creative activity*" that brings about "*the new creation*"? It is the earth / nature / creation / man. **Creation is the subject** (about which Moltmann writes a few pages back). So what Moltmann actually says with these lines, is that "*the New Testament testimony about creation*" is "*kerygma*", is "*experience of the Spirit*", is "*the energy of the new creation*". How could this conception be reconciled with a "*Trinitarian view of God*" as in traditional "*fundamentalist*" understanding? (I have before asked, Why does Moltmann want to go to India?)

*"It is not the protological creation of the world that is presented here"* in the New Testament. "*Here*", in the New Testament, "*if we look at the wrong passages*", it speaks about the "*myth about origins*". In the correct "*passages*" therefore, "*it is the eschatological creation*" "*that is presented here*" – "*as might be expected of testimonies belonging to the messianic era*".

This Moltmann further explains as "*God's eschatological creation ... put into language*" – "*kerygma*"! "*God's eschatological creation*" **exists**, "*is put into ... words ... raise ... make alive ... call alive*".

Moltmann's whole purpose with these analyses, is to show the difference between the Old Testament witness to God and the New Testament witness to God. The *kerygma* or "Message" of the Gospel and the *Spirit* that is the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, are not the power or "*energy*" of the Old Testament or *mythical* creation. It cannot be seen or *experienced*, **there**.

Now that for a "*fundamentalist*" "*traditionalist*" "*Trinitarian*" view of God, is unacceptable. But Moltmann has warned the reader, "*By 'biblical', we mean here Jewish and Christian, not fundamentalist*". (As though "*fundamentalist*" cannot be "*biblical*" or "*Christian*"!) In this paragraph (3 / 4) "*Messianic Knowledge of the World*" includes knowledge of creation; but "*Old Testament ... belief in creation*" excluded "*Messianic Knowledge of the World*". I ask Moltmann the same questions I before have asked the Reformers, Were the patriarchs and prophets justified? How were they justified – by faith perhaps? **If Moses did not see Christ, as Hebrews 11 says, how could he have kept Passover?**

I can now return to my earlier speaking on the first Sabbath Day that was "made for man's sake", and re-iterate my conclusion, that the creation-Sabbath was God's gift of mercy to man because it was God's gift of mercy to a sinner-man. The creation saga of the Old Testament contains "*Messianic Knowledge of the World*" or it is a "*myth about origins*" that has nothing to do with grace, with truth or with God. And if that makes of me a fundamentalist then surely I am one and I then don't want to be anything but a fundamentalist.

#### 7.7.1.9.2

##### **Fundamental**

To be fundamental(ist) means one should be consistent because one's basis for believing is rock hard solid. Moltmann who does not want to be a fundamentalist – is he consistent? For example, "*... a promise points towards its own fulfilment and anticipates a future still to come. The promise is caught up and absorbed in its fulfilment: when what has been promised is realized, the promise is discarded.*" (Emphasis CGE) The same inconsistency could be illustrated with different quotations. But here we have it in a single thought. When Peter on Pentecost recalls the promises of the Old Testament, he says, "**THIS IS THAT WHICH** was spoken by the prophet"! He *discards* not, but **takes hold of the promise fundamentally**, this, its *realisation*. A *promise points towards its own fulfilment* – it means what fills it to the full, **is** the **promise** – *the promise is caught up and is absorbed in its fulfilment*. A *promise anticipates a future still to come* – that means a promise **is** that future already and in the present **is its presence**. A promise anticipates its

**own** future – especially if it is God’s promise: it as sure tomorrow as it is today and yesterday was because it not merely is the prophet’s word, but the Word by Oath of God. **In its being spoken, the promise is reality – when it is God’s promise.** But, says Moltmann, “*When what has been promised is realised, the promise is discarded.*”

So Moltmann discards the Sabbath the moment Jesus is raised from the dead incorruptible and glorified, exalted to the right hand of God in heavenly realms. Now gone, vanished is the Sabbath that contained that promise? The *form* of the promise is **emptied** of its Content – not *fulfilled* – and together they are “*discarded*”? Both no longer are of concern or importance because of their “*realisation*”? **That is absurd.** What is more absurd is that another – a strange and unprepared container is hauled in and poured to the full of the Sabbath’s Content and then venerated as the fulfilled promise? Moltmann’s principle is the same as the old “Law” arguments. When it is the Seventh Day the Law demands, the Law is abolished. But when it is the First day the Law demands, the Law is the New Law. Never! Never – because God is a God of order and faithfulness, faithfulness to his own Word and Promise. The Sabbath can never make way for the Sun’s Day! What is presumed for my concluding this conclusion against Moltmann, is that in the beginning, The-Beginning-of-the-Creation-of-God – **Jesus Christ** – was present and active and held in his hand past present and future when he “made the Sabbath Day”. The Sabbath is the **CHRISTIAN** Day of Worship-Rest. We have to do with a jealous God! His anger is a consuming fire.

This – the mercy of Christ in creation and in re-creation – comes first. Then we may start looking at chronology, because only once the **Sabbath-Rest** of God has been established in its Full Content does God make of that day The **Seventh Day** – not before. If the Seventh Day had been made first and only then God’s Sabbath Rest had been established, His Sabbath Rest would have made of the day after – of the First Day – God’s Sabbath Rest. That is Moltmann’s way of thinking. That to Moltmann is the crux.

Being but a human attempt – mortal and fallible – I started with chronology and ended or am still ending with Essence. Essence forced me – inevitable, unrelentingly, irresistibly, graciously, sweetly, surprisingly, hoping, freeing, joyously, praying, praising, worshipping. I had to end praying and worshipping because I have discovered the Sabbath **is Christ’s**. This is the story of a Calvinist and the Sabbath.

“For we which have believed do enter into the rest”.

(Hb.4:3a) Our believing is our entering. (Unbelief is disobedience, says John in an Epistle of his.)

“We which have believed”. We all are us in Adam, and Adam is us all. Adam had to enter in by faith; we have to enter in by faith – by “the

Faith of Jesus”. Adam, as we, had to belong to the Messianic era, for only the People of the Messiah live by faith – the Faith of Jesus. To live is to enter into God’s rest – but by faith and only by faith. Adam had to enter in into God’s Rest and upon God’s Rest **in and by Jesus Christ** and live – OR THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE WOULD BE DAMNED ... as we all must if we are to be saved and redeemed. We all are saved unto redemption in and by Jesus Christ. We all in Adam, and Adam in all men, must be redeemed unto salvation in “The One” – the Son of Man (the Second Adam).

It was the condition whereupon Adam could enter into God’s Sabbath Rest – that he could join with God and could commune with God . It was the condition whereupon he had to enter – in and by Jesus. “**If Jesus** had given them rest” ... that is, if Jesus had given rest to us – to us in Adam. “Them”, “unto whom the Gospel was preached” in Hebrews 4, are not only Israel, but are **all men in Adam and Adam in all men.** Directly Adam first; also Israel, but Israel in Adam. So Hebrews 4 speaks of the People of God as of Adam, and of Abraham as in Adam, and of David as in Adam, and of “us”, as in Adam.

(I cannot understand why Luther had problems with the Sermon to the Hebrew Christians?)

Now then, Hb.3:18, “To whom swore He that they should not enter into His Rest but to **them that believed not?**” – which is **the whole human race** and the whole human race in Adam! Hebrews speaks of creation time and those who then – in time and history – were the People of God. As God “**in his wrath, swore:** They shall not enter into My Rest!” ... BUT BY FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST ALONE! God swore this “**although his works were finished from the foundation of the world!**” That was the cause of God’s anger – that his works were perfect from the beginning – ready for all men of all ages, to enter upon His celebrating his finished and flawless works – yet all men of all ages in Adam “**because of unbelief entered not**”.

Mark well: This is the story of the beginning of creation; of the history of creation from the first. There is no history or time between creation and sin. As Flavel puts it by the words of the Psalmist, Adam lodged not for a night.

“For He thus in the Scriptures tells of a certain place in the beginning when God on this wise of the Seventh Day spoke: And God did rest the Seventh Day from all His works.” (4:4-5) God could not by man’s unbelief and disobedience, be put off from **FINISHING HIS PURPOSE.** God rested and Adam rested in Him-Who-Stood-In-For-Man.

The preacher to the Hebrew Church here speaks as of the **present.** Says he, in the first place, “Seeing therefore **it remains** that some must



enter God's Rest". "Some" – that is, **us**, who "**today**" – by the "*energy*" of the "*new creation*", the "*Spirit*" – hear God's speaking that says, "Harden not your hearts"! "We, **Christians**, must enter God's Rest". "And", in the second place, says the preacher, "... because all men as in Adam ("them") to whom God's speaking was first preached, did **not** respond in faith, **therefore**, God again limits a certain day ... Today if ye hear ...!" Immediacy – no in between – one People and one dispensation for all as there is but one Mediator between man and God.

I said, "Therefore" – it is still the "seeing" or "Therefore understand!" with which the text starts. Therefore, If God's plan with the Sabbath for man ("The Sabbath was made for man.") in the beginning was frustrated – which it was not – it nevertheless remains for us today! God's Rest today is still proffered us in Jesus as it was proffered Adam in Jesus. Adam did not hearken God's speaking, and we, "when we today", "hear His Voice", we also, do not obey, but "harden our hearts". We harden our hearts for the same reason that Adam did ... that we sin as Adam sinned. "For (neither of us) have an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ... Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" – the need of sinners in distress; sinners who must enter God's Rest by faith and by faith only in Jesus Christ.

This the Sabbath stands prepared for: "As a help in time of need". **This the Sabbath was created for** in the beginning when God was finishing all his works he had done. **This the Sabbath was planned for, determined and appointed.** The Sabbath finished God's creation – the Sabbath therefore remains in the present time in which God has finished all his works he had done. The Sabbath that originated in God's Perfect Being is the present continuing of his past perfected creation through and in Jesus Christ. It is only possible if we speak of Jesus Christ as the *goal* of the creation and *promise* present in its beginning and in its *history*. It is only possible if Grace and the Plan of Redemption is **presupposed** right centrally within and essentially present in the creation of the world and of the Sabbath Day. It follows we must presuppose All Men's (Adam's) fall before the Sabbath's beginning in the evening of the Sabbath's beginning and God's encounter with All Men in his state of being a sinner.

There is a lot more in chronology than what immediately meets the eye. Chronology shows the Sabbath does not merely belong with creation – it belongs with redemption – the new creation ... FIRST! The Sabbath belongs with the New Creation **before** it belongs to first creation. Moltmann supposes of **the Sunday** that is belongs to the New Creation – not even in the Sabbath's stead because the Sabbath has just vanished. (Alright, he says it still stands – but he doesn't convince at all.)

Now Moltmann even says, "*That is why the Sabbath is not a day of creation; it is 'the Lord's Day'.*" But I'm not surprised, because he says "*The Sabbath is not a day of creation*". All he means it's surrealistic. "*That is why*", refers Moltmann to his reason for the conclusion he here makes. "*That is why*" **what?:-** "*Creation can be seen as God's revelation of his works; but it is only the sabbath that is the revelation of God's self.*" It means the Sabbath doesn't belong with or to creation, it is not, creation – it is intangibly "*the revelation of God's self*". I'm not surprised by this 'admission' of Moltmann's because he says (just before), "*That is why the sabbath of creation is already the beginning of all created being. Because the sabbath of creation is God's sabbath, and because in his rest his eternal glory becomes present, every human sabbath becomes 'a dream of completion', as Franz Rosenzweig says. And when men and women rest from their human works, this becomes a fore-token of the eternal feast of the divine glory.*" (p. 280) What about Christ then?! This is deifying the Sabbath Day.

Moltmann says this all under the heading of "*The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation*", not under the heading, "*The Feast of Redemption*" – where he speaks of Sunday! He places "*the Lord's Day*" in inverted commas! He speaks of nothing but "*the sabbath of creation*". When he says "*the Sabbath is not a day of creation*", he simply means that God didn't create on the Sabbath Day. "*The sabbath of creation is already the beginning of all created being*" is no direct contradiction, but means *the sabbath of creation is not the beginning of the New "created being"*. "*The sabbath of creation is ... the beginning of all created being*" – not its end or goal which is "*The Feast of the New Creation*", Sunday. "*The sabbath of creation is God's sabbath*" – Moltmann's emphasis. It is not the **Christian** Sabbath – it is God's – Old Testament. "*Because in his (God's) rest his eternal glory becomes present, every human sabbath becomes 'a dream'*" – merely – "*of completion*". "*Every sabbath*" is "*human*" – i.e., it is "*creation*". Notice that Moltmann here – correctly – does not think of "*his (God's) rest*" as the Sabbath Day. God's "*glory becomes present*" because it is "*eternal*" and is in itself omni-"*present*" (in the "*Spirit*"). "*When men and women rest from their human works, this becomes a fore-token of the eternal feast of the divine glory*" – the Sabbath points to Sunday, the supposed "*eternal feast of the divine glory*". All Moltmann's Sabbath-talk is meant to glory the Sunday.

So, as far as I am able to discern, Moltmann's calling the Sabbath "*the Lords Day*" is a misnomer. If not a misnomer then his calling the Sabbath "*the Lords Day*" is deception – I would not be able to say to what advantage. He surely could not have meant to make Sabbatharians feel good. To call the Sabbath "*the Lords Day*" but not to **keep and**

**believe** it the **Christian** “ ‘*Lords Day*’ ”, is hollow praise to “**God’s Sabbath**”.

Or Moltmann when speaking of the Sabbath as the Lord’s Day, is simply dreaming of his dream of “*peace with nature*”. Remember, *God in Creation* is “*an ecological doctrine of creation*”. Moltmann dreams “*the Sabbath is ‘the Lord’s Day’*” because for him “*peace with nature*”, “*will never be without the experience and celebration of God’s sabbath*”. (p. 277, middle)

Here – as quite often elsewhere – Moltmann reminds me of something I once read in D.F. Nichol’s book, *Answers to Objections*. (pp. 238-239) He quotes Dr. Wilber Fletcher Steele in the *Methodist Review* May-June 1899, article, *Must Syntax Die That the Sabbath May Live?* “*As a vital or corroboratory part of any argument for the sanctifying of the Lord’s day (Sunday), this travestied exegesis, instead of being a monumental discovery, is but a monumental blunder. Thereby our foes will have us in derision. “Tell it not in Gath, / Publish it not in the streets of Battle Creek, / Lest the daughters of the Sabbatarians rejoice, / Lest the daughters of the Saturdarians triumph.”*” We may well change the methodology from “*Syntax*” to Theology; the topology from “*Battle Creek*” to Tuebingen; and the ideology from “*Sabbatarian*” to Pseudo Sabbatarian.

#### 7.7.1.10.1.

#### **The Sabbath – The Place of Human Response and Christian Service Obsolete, or, Serving?**

13 February 2002

Martin Rumscheidt, in his Foreword to *Fragments, Grave and Gay* from Barth, Fontana Library, p 12-13, states,

*“To Barth, the place of the human response to the Word of the God who arose and went to man because of his favour for him, is the Church. It is only when it is in that place, and nowhere else, that a congregation is a Christian Congregation, and it is from that place that it (Christian Congregation) derives its worth. But since the worth consists in responding, it (Christian Congregation) can only follow after the Word of God that has gone before. To Barth, however, to follow after means to serve. God is the God who favours man. He is not served by the congregation when it ceases to see its essence and task in service, to its own people and those around them. This is clearly shown in the evaluation of the ‘Ten Articles on the freedom and Service of the Church’ .... ‘The Freedom and Service of the Church’, is how Barth puts it. ‘With what else should the Church ... be concerned other than with its*

*freedom over and against the world about it and its service in the world? Elsewhere in this volume he maintains that the Church that does not serve, represents a crass atheism. ... (Barth assumes the role of prophet; and he proves to be one truly.) ... The atheism that is the real enemy is the ‘Christianity’ that professes faith in God very much as a matter of course, perhaps with great emphasis, and perhaps with righteous indignation at atheism wild or mild, while in its practical thinking and behaviour it carries on exactly as if there were no God. It professes its belief in Him, while in practice He is the last of the things it thinks about, takes seriously, fears or loves. God is thus turned into an item in the inventory of an old-fashioned or partially modernised house, a piece of furniture the owner would refuse to part with in any circumstance, but for which he has nevertheless ceased to have any real use.”*

*“He (God) is not served by the congregation when it ceases to see its essence and task in service, to its own people and those around them.”*

Obviously the service of the **Church, to God**, is meant – the Church’s service to God’s glory and God’s worship – *to its own People and to those around them*. The Church **on duty** is supposed – which duty is a perpetual diligence. **Then** only is the Church the “*Congregation*” – and that is where the Church’s service in its keeping of the Sabbath enters in into the scope of Church *service* and worship (ethics). Then, “*God is not served by the congregation when it ceases to see its essence and task in service*”. Stewardship and the Sabbath are inseparable.

How could the Church evaluate the Sabbath in the context of its own “*essence and task in service*” if that very *service and task* is denied the Sabbath? What the Church lives by, the Sabbath lives by – or should live by! If living service is denied the Sabbath, its keeping becomes the *crassest* legalism – when passivity and laziness become self-righteousness.

A **Church** that does not **keep** God’s Sabbath Day, but only chants its virtues, cannot be a Church that serves. This has been an unheard of thing till Moltmann’s entering the scene. A **Church** that does not **keep** God’s Sabbath Day, but only chants its virtues cannot be a Church that benefits the People of God or the people around them. The same applies to a **theology** that glorifies the Sabbath as long as it remains *the sabbath of creation or the sabbath of Israel*, and does not become the Sabbath of the *worshipping, serving, responding, Church*. The same applies to a **believer** who would have ‘*no objection or argument against the Sabbath, but ...!*’ ... Who despises it – because the Sabbath got dispossessed of its usefulness and practical spiritual advantages. The First Day ... the cuckoo that jostled the Sabbath out. But rather that, than to celebrate the Sabbath’s demise but preserve its praises. Rather than to ruminate on the Sabbath like a hen hatching a sterile egg.

Existence in time and the world without the **service the Church** renders it, would be the relentless count down to the final zero of extermination and oblivion. Take away Christianity, and the present era no longer is the Kingdom of God and heaven, but doomsday. Of course the enemies of the Christian Faith and even many Christians themselves will not admit it – but that is the matter of fact. We Christians don't realise the **reality** of the mercies of God the world exists under and by because of His **Church** on earth. We do not appreciate duly the mercies of God which the world **presently** exists under and lives by because of **Christ** and the **Faith of Jesus**. We do not really believe the Kingdom of God and Heaven is the Rule of Christ and the Church his Body and Dominion **in our age**. We have surrendered to the principalities and wisdom of the world and even to the prince of darkness. But God put all things under the feet of the Lord of his Church. His is the dominion of the Body that is Christ's! The Kingdom of Christ in it is what makes the world go round – and what makes it keep a certain hope in the future. I'm not talking of the Holy Empire – see Das Kommen Gottes. I'm speaking of God's miserable, failing, sick and sinning Church. The presence of God's ten righteous is what still saves Sodom and Gomorra. In fact, it is the One Righteous of God Who is Saviour of the world, still. However much the Church resembles the world it still is Abraham that pleads before God on behalf of the lost. However much the Church resembles the lost it non the less is Lot for whose sake the cities of the world are granted propitiation.

Still every Sabbath Day, irrespective of the sway of powers and times, months and seasons, the whole earth and all the armies of the Lord in the Body that is Christ's, come up and move in to worship before the face of the LORD God. And because it is a coming up in the Name of the LORD Jesus Christ, the world finds grace in the eyes of the LORD. The service of the Church to the world practically means the proclamation, adoration and veneration of the Name of Jesus Christ in a faithless and perverse generation. It means proclaiming, Thy Kingdom come! The Church thus serves the world, and the place of its service is the Sabbath Day in the Kingdom of heaven and in the Covenant of Grace.

“Believe Me”, said Jesus, “there comes a time”, that you will not worship the Father here or there, but in Truth and in Spirit. (In the Power of the Name of Jesus Christ through the operations of the Holy Spirit working effectively in the hearts of men.) Only the **time** – **the Day** – of that “*coming*” “*worship*” remains **as the place** of God's worship.

Only its time and Day remains for Jesus doesn't say you will worship God one by one, each on his own, but **where** two or just three **are come together, there – in that space in time** – I will be. The worship or service which Jesus foresaw (“it shall be”) was that of the one

Body – as our Confession says, the Communion of the ‘saints’ – “true believers”. Jesus prophesied the worship of believers **on the Day of Congregation** which is the Day of Worship Service of the ‘**Sabbath**’ – the Sabbath of the New Earth and the New Heavens which Isaiah foretold. God would be worshipped “like it behoves” or “should be” – *dei*. The realisation of this rule for the worship and service of his Church which Jesus instituted in John 4:23-24, is the exact fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah 66:22-23.

The spirituality of Christian worship is phenomenal in this respect that it does not do away with **space and time of worship** as the religions of heathendom do. Christian worship in fact creates space and time and mutual coherence and solidarity through physical presence and special appointment in time, for worship and service. This is what the holiness of the Sabbath means for Christianity – or should mean. The reality of the true serving **Church** is the reality of God's true **Sabbath Day** being truly kept and honoured because the Sabbath's only keeping and only honour is, to serve – to respond to God's call through the Body that is Christ's. If the Church must be the humble and praying servant of God and man, the Sabbath must be the humble **servant** at the service of God's servants.

The world lives by the Church's serving its Lord; the Church lives by its serving its Lord; The Sabbath lives by its serving the Church. The Sabbath of the Lord thy God never can be *an item in the inventory of an old-fashioned* (house of Israel) *or partially modernized* (Christian) *house, a piece of furniture the owner would nevertheless refuse to part with in any circumstance, but for which he never ceased to have any real use.*

This I say specifically to Moltmann, because I don't know of another who holds the same opinion of the Sabbath. This I say specifically to everyone who keeps the Sabbath by reason of the Law, for as the Law has retired, so the Sabbath Law must have been shelved. The Service required of the Sabbath can only be received from its Lord – its new Law and Energy of Fulfilment: the Power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The Sabbath can never be redundant and useless but still serve an ornamental purpose – ornamentally it becomes a sign of the *crassest* legalism – a sign of Judaism, for “who (or what) is not with / for / pro Me, is against / anti Me”, Mt.12:30. A Sabbath that does not originally and essentially belong to Christian Faith through active service to the Risen Christ, cannot serve any meaningful purpose **in Christian worship**. A Sabbath that is adored and praised for its own beauty and virtue is an idol. The Sabbath does not tolerate lip-service; neither does the Sabbath's Lord tolerate veneration of the Sabbath for its own sake. To get poetic about the Sabbath but to have no real use for it in the Christian

Church, is to venerate an object of art displayed and highly elevated, like the lofty towers of a cathedral where no-one is able to partake in the Church's congregation, worship and service. It can only be appreciated **from outside the Church.**

To Barth, says Martin Rumscheidt, "*the place of the human response to the Word of the God who arose and went to man because of his favour for him, is the Church.*" What here in terms of space is called the Church, in terms of time, means the Sabbath. The Sabbath is where and when "*God arose and went to man because of his favour for him*". *God arose and went to man* – God took the initiative – despite the fact that man abandoned post of service where he had to guard his world against false gods that render true service to God, useless. *God arose and went to man* despite man's changed allegiance to the comely but venomous snake. *God arose and went to man* despite *the human response to the Word of God* – an initiative of love to a response of disdain. That was God's Sabbath Act – the Act of His Love. Only in Jesus Christ did man respond accepting and obedient to the Word of God; only in Jesus Christ did man render acceptable service to the world he lived in – "For God so loved the world He gave his only begotten Son ...". I'm talking of the **creation-Church**; I'm talking of the **creation-Sabbath** – both are the **Christian Church** and the **Christian Sabbath Day**.

Could Moltmann have ascribed to the Sabbath he talks of, and to the creation he talks of, **Christian service**? I doubt, **because he also talks of the Christian Sunday**. The fact that Moltmann not only talks of the Sabbath but also of Sunday, that he talks of "*the Feast of the Beginning*" of "*the New Creation*" **while** he talks of "*the sabbath of the creation*", "*the Feast of the Redemption*" of "*Israel*" and "*the creation*", **is the only reason why** he does not ascribe to the original "*sabbath of the creation*" and "*Feast of the Redemption*" its DUE CHRISTIAN quality and meaning. He keeps this its true meaning and value away from the Sabbath not because the Seventh day does not have the capacity, composition or potential for a Christian and Christological meaning. He strips the Sabbath of Christian meaning, not because the Sabbath's nature repels that eschatological realisation of Christ and his resurrection – not because the Sabbath doesn't dispose of that inclination and facilitation towards Christ and a Christian content – but because he reserves all these for the Sunday. Moltmann does it because it is impossible that the Sabbath and the First Day could have shared these excellencies. A Christian, final Redemption meaning cannot be split up – from the nature of its extraordinariness and uniqueness. So if ones must attribute these qualities to one day no other day can have them. A jealous God won't have his worshippers worship another god; his day of worship He won't have used for the worship of a strange god. Christianity cannot serve two

masters. God cannot have two days of worship – if Sunday is the Christian Day of Worship then for no reason and at no stage is the Sabbath it. Allegiance cannot be split; faithfulness isn't twofaced. Moltmann gives the Sabbath no Christian – no "*New Creation*" – meaning or value, but taps every drop of it for his nursery. There he will feed his Sunday seedling with it ... and still try and save the world. Still Moltmann will stand in wonderment before the withered and spent flower of the Sabbath.

The "*Sabbath of Israel*" receives a wonderful place of adoration with Moltmann; it is hung with academic laurels – **but is given no usefulness**; no real and actual place in **Christian service**. Where Moltmann speaks of "*men and women*" who "*keep the sabbath*" and who appreciate its "*stillness*", he imagines them and at most visualises some Israelites. He doesn't think of Christians keeping the Sabbath for being Christians!

For Barth "*the worth consists in responding*" says Rumscheidt. A Sabbath that does not accommodate man's responding to the initiative and invitation of God's love-Feast cannot be the Sabbath of God's Rest. *Responding can only follow after the Word of God that has gone before. "To follow after means to serve."* To follow after is faith; to serve is obedience. Man by faith, enters, into God's Sabbath-Rest. If he enters it is by faith only or not at all; if by faith man responds, it means he enters. This is the first qualification to God's love-feast of rest – All Men – Adam – Adam and Eve the mother of us all – shall live! By Christ shall he live, by the Word of God. By faith in Christ shall he live – or die. This is the first rule of the righteousness and peace that is of God – the first rule for All Men on the day he was formed from the dust of the earth by the will and the word and the hand of God – the rule of the Messianic Era as Era of Promise. This is the Day, the Seventh Day of God's Sabbath Rest to which God invited All Men but which invitation All Men declined. This is the Seventh Day the Sabbath in which God, **notwithstanding, and graciously** (He wasn't embarrassed or disconcerted) **rested assured from all his works – as finished in Jesus Christ and in Him in resurrection from the dead.**

Even God had no other way about this. The resurrection of Christ must be **from the dead** or it is no true resurrection, no divine act, no victory of the Lord God. The resurrection of Jesus that completes the works of God is real, reality, deed and history; it is no mystical, imagined, surrealistic '*mental projection*' that is not history! No! It is the real overcoming of even the reality of evil, sin and death. So real is it. God's Rest is divine – Godly – because it is real, reality and really His Rest. God's Rest must be remembered and celebrated in real and divinely appointed and holy allotted 'tangible', observable, time, on God's

appointed Day for Christian Worship, the Day of which God thus spoke, of that space in time the Seventh Day – the Day the Lord Jesus Christ is Lord of. The Sabbath could never have evolved into existence. It suddenly appeared at the command of God’s Word – in the end of “in the beginning”.

“*The place of the human response to the Word of God*” is, – 1, where “*the Word of God arose and went to man*”, and, – 2, where “*the human response*” took place. “*To follow after means to serve.*” The Christian Sabbath cannot fulfil its proper function other than through service and the giving of itself through the mediation of grace.

Now what is Moltmann’s position in this regard? Says he, God’s “*inviolable property*” is the “*existence of God’s creatures within the fellowship of creation*”. The ‘*sanctity of the day*’ depends not on **Christian** “*fellowship*” and “*service*” – but it is a “*fellowship of creation*” *per se*. Can a ‘*fellowship*’ of solely “*creation*”, be “*inviolable*”, or be “*God’s inviolable property*”? The history of the first Sabbath contradicts such a notion. Can a “*Sabbath of creation*” that is the “*fellowship of creation*” – merely – still be “*God’s Sabbath*”? Can it serve the Community of the saints? How does God share in his own rest if not in *fellowship* of creation **and** Creator? If not *fellowship* in **Christian service**? If not, the Sabbath cannot be the Day of the Rest of the God of all time, of all eras and of the one and eternal Covenant of Grace. Then it cannot be said of “*the sabbath of creation*” that on it, “**God** rested”. Moltmann’s position here is, then it must be another day, “**Sunday: Feast of the Beginning**” of “*the New Creation*” – for that at last unites God in his revelation in Christ with “*the fellowship of creation*”.

In Genesis though nothing is read of man’s resting on the Sabbath Day – it was no “*fellowship of creation*” because man did not join in – what is creation without man? Man’s rest of the creation Sabbath is only implied in Genesis in that it is there stated that **God, rested. Therein** is implied, that God rested **in Christ**; therein is implied that man in faith in Christ, also rested the Seventh Day. Moltmann is wrong to call for another day, **for Christ was present** already in the Sabbath of creation – He represented creation and man. The First Sabbath Day was a Christian fellowship in which **man took part in Christ by faith**. The Sabbath Day **of creation** is the *Feast of the Beginning of the New Creation* as truly in the dispensations of **God**, as it is true in the dispensations of creation and history (in the sense Moltmann understands it as well). In the dispensations of God, man **only in the Christian Sabbath Day of Rest actually enters into God’s Rest in Christ**.

How was Adam justified? I asked previously, and now again. I have also asked before and now ask again, What is Adam’s righteousness but the righteousness of Christ’s through faith? Is not the Church catholic,

universal, of all dispensations the one Body of Christ? There is no such thing as “*God’s Sabbath*” that belongs to or just with, “*creation*” or with, “*the fellowship of creation*”, or with Israel or with the fellowship of Israel, **that simultaneously is** not the *Feast of the Beginning of the New Creation*. Such an impossible Sabbath that is not these things is Moltmann’s Wunderkind.

The true Sabbath Rest of God belongs to and belongs with **God’s Rest which IS God’s New Creation**. The Christian Sabbath is a New Creation of God’s, just as the Christian Church “the People of God” is a New Creation of God’s. Both the People and the Day of the People’s Worship, Service and Rest, are **God’s creations of the New Creation of creation**. The New Creation is not a creation out of nothing – it is the “old” creation renewed through grace in new creation from what is dead and death. Both the Church and the Sabbath – they must always be considered together – are the works of God which He did not forget or leave to perish, but which He like a burning wood plucked from the fire and through Jesus Christ endowed with New Life. Both the Church and the Sabbath are Redeemed – franchised with the blood of the Lamb and justified by the exaltation of the Lamb to the throne of Lordship. It is the same, “old”, Creation-People – yet different and changed into the New Creation-People; It is the same, “old”, Creation-Sabbath – yet different and changed into the New Creation-Sabbath.

Some would say I expose myself very vulnerably because I argue the basics the Church would uphold for believing Sunday in stead of the Seventh Day Sabbath. But I don’t think so, for good reason. First it would be impossible to argue these things in favour of Sunday simply because they spring from the nature and history of the Seventh Day in the Scriptures – its nature and history in the Scriptures for being the Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace. Second, If Sunday had had the potential for accommodating these arguments they would have been exploited long ago. It has not been the case – it for no reason under the sun could be discovered now, and be applied to undreamed of things, now. (See Appendix, discussion of “*Sunday Worship Pre-figured in the Old Testament*”, *Former Adventist Fellowship Forum*, J. Tree.) Thirdly, It is apparent the best efforts ancient and recent have made use of quite different and differing assertions and suppositions for Sunday’s alleged validity as the Lord’s Day. Clearest of them all is Moltmann’s *theology of creation*. In every of his illustrations the mutually exclusive characters of the two opposing Days are clear. They share **no** “*connection between Sunday and the Sabbath*”! (p.278) Moltmann succeeds in creating an unbridgeable divide between “*the sabbath the feast of creation*” and Sunday the “*Feast of the New Creation*”. He expresses his surprise that the attempted relation between the two Days of Worship could have been

“*neglected for so long*”. But it had been neglected for so long because there obviously is no relatedness!

“*Connection*” – immediate and unbreakably strong to the point of **merger and identifying** – between the “*Feasts*” of Creation and Re-creation (or Redemption, or, the New Creation), is conspicuous and irrecusable in the Scriptures generally and in Genesis in particular. Both “*Feasts*” belong to the **Sabbath** Seventh Day by exigency in nature and purpose (eschatological expectation and propensity), by contingency in Word and Prophecy (Law and Israel), and by emergency in Promise and Fulfilment. (We find the exact illustration and actual history of the process of the Sabbath’s change of renewal – from “the creation Sabbath” to “the New Creation Sabbath” – recorded in the Gospels.) But any “*connection*” between the Sabbath and the First Day is, purely, contrived!

Because the **Church** is Sunday’s only ‘proof’, The Ecclesiastical argument in favour of Sunday must be Moltmann’s last resort. Even Augustus Hesse who is the greatest exponent of the Ecclesiastical argument, has to fall back on the tasselled twins Act 20:7 and 1 Cor.16:2. Moltmann could do no different. As soon as he begins his motivations for “*Sunday the Feast of the Beginning*” (p. 292), it is the same old story. (We will get to it in detail later on.) Moltmann says nothing – absolutely nothing – new. Except perhaps, the frankness with which he acknowledges the *threat* of the “*paganisation*” of “*the Christian feast-day*” unless its **alleged** “*link*” with “*Israel’s Sabbath*” is ‘*preserved*’ – as if a “*link*” ever existed; as if a “*link*” could prevent the pagan propensities of Sunday to shine through! As if a “*link*” would not have brought over and preserved the **Sabbath’s** intrinsic and inherent properties, perpetuity and validity! As if the Sabbath-Feast of Creation and the Sabbath-Feast of Redemption are not “*linked*” and “*connected*” fast in and by Jesus Christ! For it is beyond doubt that without or with such ‘*link*’, Sunday, is nothing but pagan. Which shows just how *pagan* the ‘*Christian*’ **Sunday-Feast of the Beginning**, really is. But more real than the *paganisation threat* of Sunday in Moltmann, is the crassness of the threat of idolisation of the **Sabbath-Feast of Redemption** through the emptying of it of any Christological and Christian meaning!

If one confesses God: I believe in God, he must confess the Father: I believe in God, the Father. (What Moltmann tries to explain as *natural religion*? Never!) Having confessed the Father one cannot stop, but must confess the Son: I believe in God, the Son. Having confessed the Father and the Son, one cannot stop, but must go on and confess the Holy Spirit: I believe in God the Holy Spirit. But one cannot stop after having confessed God Triune. Having confessed the Holy Spirit, I also must confess the Church for the Church is the work and creation of the Holy Spirit! And because believing the Church, I must believe the forgiveness

of sins, Christ’s return, the resurrection, the judgement and everlasting life, for that is the all-encompassing present and future of God’s creation.

Truth is though, one cannot confess all this, **by oneself!** That would not be the **Body** of Christ confessing. So the **Sabbath** is created after all things have come together. The Sabbath is created to unify the Creation-Passover-Faith, and the Christian-Resurrection-Faith. The Sabbath is their day of marriage – it follows the logical and inevitable current of the Confession! It is the Evangelical consequence of God’s revelation of Himself in Christ. God creates the Seventh Day for its service to the benefit and right of existence of God’s Elect and Christian Fellowship. “*Because of his favour for him*”, God – LORD of both man and Sabbath – “made the Sabbath for man”!

Now we are ready to read the best description in *God in Creation* of what the Christian Sabbath is **not** and can never be,

*“Existence precedes activity. So activity ends in simply being present. The reposeful existence which has found enduring being in the presence of God excels efficaciousness. The celebration of the sabbath leads to an intensified capacity for perceiving the loveliness of everything – food, clothing, the body and the soul – because existence itself is glorious. Questions about the possibility of ‘producing’ something, or about utility, are forgotten in the face of the beauty of all created things, which have their meaning simply in their very selves.”*

“*Existence precedes activity*” – One cannot make this distinction even with reference to God – much less with reference to His creation.

Creation Sabbath cannot be the New Creation Sabbath because Moltmann does not allow Christ in the Creation Sabbath – “*existence* (Creation Sabbath) *precedes activity* (New Creation Sabbath)”. Moltmann does not have Sabbatharians – Christians who believe the Sabbath – in mind when he says this. He says this while he himself is a Christian – that for Moltmann is someone who believes the ‘*Christian*’ Sunday. He says these things of the Sabbath while he is completely detached from the beautiful object he describes so artistically. He sings the praises of “*Israel’s Sabbath*” – not the praises of the Christian, “*Feast*”. In fact for Moltmann a Christian ‘*Sabbath*’ is an impossibility. What Moltmann says here, is the very opposite of what the Christian Sabbath will be and will be like. If ever reason and argument were presented that annul the Sabbath (Seventh) Day as the ‘*Christian Sabbath*’, Moltmann here supplies the ultimate, successfully.

Successfully? Here Moltmann certainly gives the ‘*Saturdarians*’ nothing to ‘*rejoice*’ over because **this**, is the precise antithesis of the Christian Day of Worship. As we have shown, the essence of the Christian Day of Worship resides in its being open for, and in its being open to, **service!** Now that makes of the Christian Day of Worship the

Day mostly given to *activity* – positive, vital, energetic exertion towards the service to God and Body and world; towards that which the Church may *produce* and offer the world, mankind, its Creator and its Saviour.

“*Existence precedes activity*”, says Moltmann. He supposes a Sabbath that is creation’s sabbath. Were it Christ’s and the Congregation’s Sabbath, its “*worth* (would) *consist in responding*”. “*Christian Congregation*” – and hence its Sabbath – “*can only follow after the Word of God that has gone before. ... To follow after means to serve*” ... for Barth, that is. Existence for the Church and Faith – according to “*the Freedom and Service of the Church*” – **follows** activity. The *existence* of the Church and its Day of Worship-Rest follows the *activity* of “*the God who arose and went to man because of his favour for him*”. The Sabbath results from *The Freedom of Service*. God’s activity is free; it is first – because it is gracious. Hence follows the freedom of man’s *responding activity*. That is the essence of the Sabbath’s meaning.

Man, this side of Christ’s Return will always live within that tension between Christian freedom in service and Christian freedom in dependence. These are the beginning and end of the Sabbath’s meaning.

“*Activity ends in simply being present*”, says Moltmann. “*Simply being present*” is *activity* in its zenith. “*Simply being present*” is the missile in the “resting” state or mode of full flight. That, is not where activity stops or “*ends*”. So is the Sabbath’s rest. Its resting is its activity in highest elevation – before gravity pulls it ‘back to earth’ so to speak. (In gymnastics they speak of the “dead point”.) The activity of rest occurs where there is movement in one mode or another – but movement in absolute state of activity. The Sabbath’s rest is not “*reposeful existence*” or static. And this side of the resurrection and immortality there’s no such thing as “*enduring being*” that has been “*found*” or reached – no perpetual “dead point”; it always is momentarily. Jewish conception of the Sabbath and Law may be able to perceive of the Sabbath’s rest in this way – “*reposeful existence*” or static – not Christian thinking ... Unless, perhaps, if such thinking of the Rest of the New Creation is reserved for quite another day that knows not “*the creation-sabbath*” – if such thinking actually makes of the creation-sabbath and the New Creation-Sabbath, two and different days! Only problem is, where does the Scriptures and the whole scheme of Covenant and Revelation conceive of anything like that?

“*The presence of God excels efficaciousness*” – Can that be in-activity, “*reposeful existence*” – whether on the part of God or on the part of man? On the contrary, it supposes ... *an intensified capacity for perceiving*. And what could that mean? On the part of man possibly what Moltmann says, “*perceiving the loveliness ...*”. But will it be a “*perceiving the loveliness of everything ... of existence itself*”, or will it

be a *perceiving of the loveliness of God’s excelling efficaciousness* in raising Christ from the dead? On the part of God it means no less. On the part of man *existence itself* is reckoned vile against the beauty of Grace. All because of *the presence of God* in raising Christ “**in Sabbath’s time**”. Redemption is glorious and because of its glory, “*existence itself is glorious*”.

To say these things that Moltmann says of the Sabbath Day, implies the impossibility of it being said of any other day. It – even before that – implies God’s *excelling efficaciousness* in raising Jesus Christ from the dead – from which Redemption and the New Creation, derive their glory – from which *activity, existence, follows!* Which gives the **Sabbath** – *the creation sabbath* – its meaning – its *New Creation* meaning. Of course is “*forgotten*” for man “*in the celebration of the Sabbath*” “*questions about the possibility of ‘producing’ something or about utility*” – **but that of salvation!** Things “*which have their meaning simply in their very selves*”, *simply* have no meaning and no beauty and no glory in the face of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! The Sabbath is not meant for the glory and the glorifying of creation or of itself – be it man’s act or work of rest. The Sabbath wasn’t made “for man” to **be utilised** for self-gain in whatever way! The Sabbath wasn’t given for its own glorification either. There sits the Sabbath like a fat Buddha and smilingly delights itself in men’s acclamations! It is not the Sabbath of the Bible.

But Moltmann constantly reminds us of what he already has said in *Theology of Hope*, that “*Christian faith that is not resurrection faith is neither Christian nor faith*”. Moltmann practices what he preaches. Moltmann shall not say a Christian word about “*the creation sabbath*”! But in Barth’s thinking, as Rumscheidt says, “*A congregation is a Christian Congregation ... only when it is ... the place of the human response to the Word of the God who arose and went to man because of his favour for him. ... It is from that place that ... the Christian Congregation derives its worth.*”

We, therefore, say, Hence, the Sabbath! To believe in God the Creator and to believe His creation, means nothing unless it is a believing in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and resurrected from the dead. That is how God arose and went to man, and that is the place of man’s response to God’s activity. That, is the only Bible Sabbath, and that, is the only Christian Sabbath.

From this perception only is it possible to think about a ‘Christian’ answer for an *ecological theology of creation*. The Sabbath witnesses to it, but is not that answer. The Sabbath points to the Return of **that** Jesus Christ – crucified and resurrected – to this earth. Towards this eschatological expectation the Sabbath – the Christian Sabbath Day –

lives and benefits man and nature. But the Christian Sabbath only by virtue of its origin – the crucified and resurrected Christ – can live forward and look forward, and, while itself being carried forward, can aid the Church forward. Or it must never be mentioned, never be given one thought in Christian theology or in the life of the Church. And then I am too scared to even think about the possibility of a Christian Faith upon the earth!

In the realisation of Christ's Body, "existence" certainly does not "precede activity". The People of God is created by the activity of God's Holy Spirit as we have already emphasised. The Holy Spirit's "resting upon" the Congregation – which is responsive activity – is what brings forth the life of the existence of the Church and the existence of its life. And from that place and from that activity comes the Sabbath! Even God cannot exist – cannot be God – but in activity, and that activity cannot be but in and through Jesus Christ. That is what makes the Christian Faith the only Faith. So with Christ's Church; so with his Sabbath Day. Its very movement outwards to essential and inherent activity is the Church's creation – is its coming into being, is its SERVICE, is its *Reason d'être*. The *Reason d'être* of the Church is its *Sitz im Leben* and *vice versa*; its rest is its work and *vice versa*. The Church's rest – like God's – is its works – it derives from the truth that God's most singular works are His most singular Rest – His Sabbath Rest! God rests in the Son. Where this Truth finds creation – pierces through its isolating harness – there creation finds its rest – **and its completion**. Creation finds its rest in the activity and life of God! In God's activity and life creation finds its Sabbath's activity and life – which is its own rest, inseparable from God's own Sabbath Rest.

And this "ends", most emphatically, NOT in "simply being present". On the contrary, All Men had to actively "enter into God's Rest" by the absolute *activity* of the "obedience" of "believing". Then where All Men through the absolute *human* activity of "unbelief, did not enter", Christ in his place, actively, obeyed, and actively, entered in, and actively, rested in God's Rest. The Sabbath that remains valid **for** the People of God's **entering**, is one of vital activity.

To say exactly this is exactly the aim of Moltmann's subtlety. With this very argument from the Sabbath Day *metaphor*, Moltmann wants to show the Creation-Sabbath cannot do for the active Feasting of Resurrection Faith's Day! For the resurrection of Jesus from the dead implies the ultimate of activity which is God's raising Christ from the dead – and therefore – according to Moltmann and the whole Church – the **First** Day – and NOT THE SABBATH – remains valid in the Sabbath's stead for the New Creation People. And *the Saturdarians rejoice!* That, is above my *capacity for perceiving*.

If Moltmann, is right, that vital **activity** really belongs with and to the Christian Day of Worship for precisely the reason of Jesus' resurrection **from the dead**, then, if he is wrong, that the **First** Day had been or could have been the Day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, and the bare truth is that the Sabbath from the nature of the case had to be and actually had been the day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead – then, the Sabbath must be the Day, not of **the inactivity of the dead**, but of the **vital activity** of the Risen and Living Christ and his Body upon earth. Then the Sabbath is the Day of **God's** vital activity of Christ rising from the dead into the Rest that is God's, and is it the day of **man's** vital activity of *response* to the *activity* of God – man's activity of also entering into the Rest that is God's and of "entering upon" "a keeping of the Sabbath Day **that there for that reason** (*ara*) remains valid for the People of God".

By reason of these conclusions, almost the whole of the next paragraph of Moltmann's cannot be accepted. "Sanctifying the Sabbath means being entirely free from the striving for happiness and from the will for performance and achievement. It means being wholly present in the presence of God. The Sabbath is sanctified through God alone – through grace alone – through trust alone. The peace of the sabbath can be viewed as the Jewish 'doctrine of justification. Anyone who looks at Israel on the Sabbath cannot reproach her with a 'righteousness of works'. And on the other hand, Christian faith in justification must be understood analogously as the sabbath rest of Christians."

So there you have it. What does the Sabbath mean for the Christian Faith? What is the Sabbath for Christians? It is the "analogous ... sabbath rest of Christians" – analogous of "Christian faith in justification". The "Jewish" Sabbath ... No wait, the inverted commas must group both words together, thus: the "Jewish Sabbath" – because there is no other Sabbath than the Jewish Sabbath. The Sabbath is an example or parable of the "Christian faith in justification". The Sabbath isn't the Day Christians should believe for their Day of Worship – that Day is Sunday because of Jesus' resurrection. That is Moltmann's appreciation of the Sabbath Day.

"Sanctifying the Sabbath means being entirely free from the striving for happiness". Does this mean the Sabbath is the reason for that *freedom*? How would a Jew answer this question? Only a Jew could answer it from Moltmann's point of view. A Jew's answer certainly would be affirmative: 'Being entirely free from the striving for happiness – that is what we keep the Sabbath for, isn't it? On the Sabbath Day our striving after happiness, is still. The Sabbath gives us rest.' A Christian could not give the same answer for obvious reason. Or could he? He could, only if he assigns to the Sabbath the merit that belongs to Christ.



The Christian should have a better answer – one that will presuppose the **Christian** belief and keeping of the Sabbath. Would that answer be the Law? If so, it isn't the Chasten Sabbath but the Jewish Sabbath. Could there be another answer – a better one? The Christian has one other answer, and that is, the Rest that Jesus gives – which is the rest earned by his resurrection from the dead. So it cannot be the Sabbath that gives rest, and the tension between the keeping of the Sabbath and the rest it gives and the freedom from anxiety and striving it brings, can only be resolved in one of two ways: Either the Sabbath must be abandoned all its worth despite, or the Sabbath must be made subservient and be made not the giver of rest and freedom, but itself the receiver of it – so that it becomes the courier and the station of translocation to the correct addressee – **the envelope stamped: “Contents: Rest and Freedom – For: Man, Country: The World God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son, Province: The Body that is Christ’s – purchased by the blood of the Lamb of God, Station: The Sabbath where God the Seventh Day rests in the Son ... where Man will collect the package – he had been informed already by the Tele-Communication Company The Gospel of Jesus Christ. If undelivered *within the greatest distance that is recoverable by grace*, please return to: **Sender: God, Country: The World God so loved that He gave His only begotten Son, Province: The Body that is Christ’s – purchased by the blood of the Lamb of God, Station: The Sabbath where God the Seventh Day rests in the Son ... where God will collect the package *within the greatest distance that is recoverable by grace*.****

So no Christian meaning will do for the reasons which Moltmann suggests the Jews observe the Sabbath for.

#### 7.7.1.10.2.

#### **To Sanctify the Sabbath Day**

15 January 2002

To continue with the considerations of the second paragraph of p. 286 :-

“*Sanctifying the Sabbath means being entirely free from the striving for happiness and from the will for performance and achievement*”. And because no Christian meaning will do for a person’s “*sanctifying of the Sabbath*”, the reasons Moltmann here recommends, will not do for a Christian. Moltmann is obsessed with the idea of “rest”. For him it is the total content of the Sabbath day; for him it is inactivity to the point of being in a state of the dead – *worth-less response* (to use Rumscheidt’s words) because it is static and a response – if it can be called that – of inactivity. Moltmann further on even speaks of the Sabbath’s “*tranquillising*” effect. His is precisely Judaism’s idea of the Sabbath’s rest – one of inactivity.

I realise full well Moltmann visualises this “rest” in the context of modern competitive and exploiting society; that human beings in the way he describes, on the Sabbath should stop money-making or gain in any form at the cost and detriment of the creation. But remember that Moltmann sees the Sabbath as the Jewish paradigm for the world and Christianity to learn by. The Sabbath teaches modern man to appreciate **nature** better and to respect it duly – not to worship Christ duly. Which confirms my inference from the whole of Moltmann’s use of and reference to the Sabbath Day that it for him is no more than a law on stone exemplified by the Jews from which Christianity may draw inspiration.

Moltmann takes the Sabbath’s past its limits where he says, “*It means being wholly present in the presence of God. The Sabbath is sanctified through God alone – through grace alone – through trust alone*”. “*Grace alone*” ... as though grace may be another kindness of God than the Grace that is God’s exclusive revelation in, by and through Jesus Christ; as though there can be more than one grace, one that can be equated with the “*trust*” of “*human beings*” in their keeping of the Sabbath day. Grace is God’s – it isn’t man’s trust in God’s grace. It is not man’s trust that sanctifies the Sabbath, but the Sabbath is one gift of God’s grace that witnesses to the one Source of all grace: Invocation: *The love of God the Father and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ... be ....* By this *Grace* the Sabbath is *sanctified* – it is reserved for the Sabbath **as for no other day**. The unbelieving Jew cannot pray for **this** Grace – not even on his Sabbath Day – not even in the idleness of his *justification*. The Sabbath cannot give Judaism this *Peace*. This *justification* is **by the faith of Jesus** – only.

Moltmann speaks as though man through ‘natural religion’ – of which he has far too much to say – proceed towards and intrude God’s *presence*; as if God’s *presence* be summoned at the click of the finger; as though *justification* pamper the man of leisure. He speaks as though God’s *presence* itself is not God’s own condescending to man and his world in Jesus Christ. Moltmann’s Sabbath does not even reach the borders of “*the creation*” properly – because it lacks Christ!

The sanctification God *sanctified* the Sabbath with, has an earthly, physical, non-profit motive whereby the Sabbath’s goodness is wholly answered ... says Moltmann. There’s nothing prophetic, nothing eschatological, nothing Christological or Soteriological in God’s sanctification of the Sabbath day – nothing that may point outside itself to Another Fullness the Sabbath might have been “put aside” or “meant for”. The Sabbath can serve only creation. Nothing divine and no glory be left the sabbath day! Least of all, the *Sunday-darians* must *rejoice* in the Sabbath day.

If God really is the only who sanctifies the Sabbath Day, how does He do it? Outside Himself or as Himself? And if – we may presume – as Himself, then how but in Jesus Christ? If God then in Christ sanctified the Sabbath day – then the Sabbath Day is **more** than just the form or container or empty shell. Just the Sabbath’s being handled by God – we’re not even speaking of its being created by God and its being especially created by God and its being especially created by God for the purpose of his mercies in Jesus Christ “to-us-ward”! If God’s grace of love might touch the body of death of man’s sinful being – and waters of life overflows the heart, how much more – if the Sabbath be but touched by God – it is enough to fill its form to the brim and overflowing!

Again Moltmann, when they apply to the Sabbath Day, is able to speak of God’s divine acts – the supreme and prerogative acts of God of *sanctification* and *grace* – as ordinary and every day acts. And correspondingly, of man’s corresponding acts of the Sabbath Day, as ordinary and every day acts. For the acts of “*happiness*” and refraining from “*performance*” are just ordinary and every day. Eventually the Sabbath Day ends up just ordinary and every day.

“*It (the sabbath) means being wholly present in the presence of God.*” Is there ever a moment every man is not “*wholly present in the presence of God*”? Moltmann of course doesn’t mean that sort of presence. Or does he in fact want us to join him on his trip to India? For it seems he must mean it the way the Buddhist monks work themselves into God’s presence with great effort of absence of the body. (Or something like that – I don’t know their religion well.) So Christianity could just as well go learn these Sabbath School Lessons from Buddhism, and perhaps discover the Sabbath’s ecumenical advantages.

Let us first of all replace the word “*Israel*” in our quoted passage with the word “Judaism”, for four reasons, first, “*Israel*” of old long since do not exist; two, “*Israel*” of old received another kind of righteousness than the righteousness supposed in this paragraph of Moltmann’s; three, Moltmann uses the concept “*Israel*” for the purpose of demonstration; four, “*Israel*” in the Christian era indicates Christianity.

This sort of “*the peace of the Sabbath*” then – as we have inferred above – therefore and without a doubt “*can be viewed as the doctrine of justification* of Judaism”, because “*anyone who looks at Judaism on the sabbath cannot reproach her with a ‘righteousness of works’*”. Truly not – if this is her “*sanctifying of the sabbath*”! For if this is her “*sanctifying of the sabbath*”, we must reproach her with a **self-righteousness of sloth**. Which only is a *‘righteousness of works’* disguised.

This is what Israel looks like on the Sabbath day without Jesus Christ and “the righteousness which is of God” (Paul). This is what Israel even the **Christian** Israel looks like on the Sabbath day without Jesus Christ and

“the righteousness which is of God in Christ through faith”.

No one sees that Christian Israel I suppose; it is non-existent because the Christian Israel doesn’t keep the Sabbath – it keeps the First Day or Lord’s Day! Ah! So that is Christian Israel’s self-righteousness! Distance herself from the Day and distance herself from its righteousness! We’ll see how we get past the Scriptures with that one! And perhaps past the judgements of God. And past prophecy and eschatology and and ...?

No! Creation as creation – the “*human being*” – is unable to achieve the non-achievement of the Sabbath Day. That achievement awaits the Sabbath at its appointed time and meeting place: an achievement of its Creator’s – the coming Christ who *explicitly* every week on the Sabbath Day meets with His People. At that meeting achievement belongs to God only – which means it belongs to Him alone in that He the Seventh Day rested in raising Jesus from the dead: Christ Anointed Lord, exalted to the midst of the Throne and the right hand of the glory of God Almighty. This is the Sabbath’s Rest. The Sabbath’s rest is not its own – it is its Creator Lord’s. The Sabbath is empty but for its meaning of **divine** rest. And the **human** rest of the Sabbath Day is vain but for **its** meaning of **divine** rest – a rest of *Grace alone* – “**if Jesus had given them rest!**”

“*When the Reformed Catechisms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries define ‘the chief end’ of human beings as ‘to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever’, this applies pre-eminently to the Sabbath. But because it applies explicitly to the Sabbath, it interpenetrates the whole of everyday life and all the labours of the world.*”

Again, will the *Saturdarians rejoice* and the *Sabbatarians triumph*? At first sight, yes! At second thought, absolutely! By the third reading, never! One does not need to even think about the fact that the Reformers (of both centuries) composed their catechisms while they believed the First Day ‘Lord’s Day’ and ‘Sabbath’. The fact beforehand would make Moltmann’s application of the principle To the Glory of God to the (Saturday)-Sabbath, unwarranted. As I said, there is no need for this objection – Moltmann’s own assertion itself speaks against itself enough.

But before I proceed with analysing this passage, I quickly want to e-mail you one question, How do you manage to keep on teaching the Gospel and practising theology with the Sabbath day implied if it is the Jews’ Sabbath Day and not the Lord’s Day? Yes, I mean the one Sabbath Day the Seventh Day!

Will your answer be Moltmann’s – “*The sabbath is sanctified through God alone – through grace alone – through trust alone*”? ‘*God’s grace works in me, trust; and so I keep the Sabbath in sanctifying it; that is my sanctifying the Sabbath Day.*’ Might that be your answer? Then what is the Sabbath different than your daily trust and your daily

receiving of the grace of trust? And what is your every day then different from your Sabbath Day? Then, most important, what is your grace and your trust and the sanctity of your Sabbath different from the grace and the sanctity of every day? from that of the unbelieving Jew? Or is the Jew not an unbeliever but a believer? And so the question can get exponential because we busy ourselves with the wrong presupposition to the question. That presupposition is Moltmann's in saying, "Christian faith in justification must be understood analogously as 'the sabbath rest' of Christians". Christian faith in justification is thus reduced to man's activity of **inaction** – and thus remains a justification by works and a self-righteousness. Simple: The correct answer to the Sabbath-question is the only answer and answer to each and every question about the question – it is Jesus Christ the Action, the Activity, the Act of God in raising Him from the dead. That can never be the answer of the Jew – of the unbeliever; that can only be the Christian's answer – or the answer of the justified-by-the-faith-of-Jesus-sinner – the person that finds it impossible to speak or to think of "grace" or "trust" or "sanctification" or "justification" or "righteousness" or whatever divine virtue of grace or grace of grace but to think and to speak of Jesus Christ and God in and through and by Him, WORKING!

Then how does one read Moltmann's statement about the "sanctifying the Sabbath", then? What does one think of "the peace of the Sabbath", then? What is "in the presence of God", then? As I sit here typing I ask myself these questions while the Sabbath dawns in the dusk of Friday afternoon–Sabbath's evening. I pray these questions to God in great loneliness and longing. A loneliness greater than being imprisoned because it is a loneliness midst the living and the free – indeed a loneliness midst my own. God knows if these the holy hours of his Sabbath Day do not bring to me my sweet Jesus! Miserable passive impassivity! Bring me to Christ I pray! Let this be for me Thy holy Sabbath Day of your one and wondrous exertion – to reach me, sinner, my God and my Father! Let this your Sabbath Day be to me my rest in Your Rest. And then o God, make this your Sabbath Day of appointment with your own People, to me also, my meeting place with You – with You, o sweetest Jesus!

"When the Reformed Catechisms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries define 'the chief end' of human beings as 'to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever', this applies pre-eminently to the Sabbath. But because it applies explicitly to the Sabbath, it interpenetrates the whole of everyday life and all the labours of the world."

"'The chief end' of human beings is 'to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever' ". How does this take place? Only in one way – by the

worship of **Jesus Christ** the Lord and Saviour of God's creation. **Who** glorifies God? "Human beings"? No! Human beings are they that dishonour God. "Jesus Christ is this reality of the New Human Being which the Christian puts on. He is created in righteousness. He is righteousness, which means, He asserts the right of God and therewith gives God the honour and the glory." ("Jesu Christus ist diese Wirklichkeit des neuen Menschen, den der Christ anzieht! ... Der neue Mensch ist 'in Gerechtigkeit' geschaffen. Er ist gerecht, das heisst, er gibt Gott recht und damit die Ehre, die ihm zukommt." (Heft 27. s. 4 Vorträge in Bièvres 1948 Paris) (Emphasis CGE)

Barth says of this **New Human Being, Jesus Christ**, "The reality of the New Human Being is the central content of the Gospel. ... The New Human Being is the whole Gospel. ... The New Human Being is the fullness of the grace of God." "Die Wirklichkeit des neuen Menschen ist der zentrale Inhalt des Evangeliums ... Der neue Mensch ist das ganze Evangelium ... Er ist die Fülle der Gnade Gottes." (s. 9)

Of the **Reality** of this **New Human Being**, Jesus Christ, Barth says, "The New Human Being is the object and the content of the Message which the Church must proclaim to the world. (Emphasis Barth) The Church exists by the power of the commission: Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature! The Gospel is the New Human Being. And so He is the meaning of the existence of the Church. Church is there, where the attempt is being made to invest the Reality of the Message with hearing, thought, respect, and understanding." "Der neue Mensch ist der Gegenstand und der Inhalt der Botschaft, die die Kirche in der Welt auszurichten hat. Sie existiert in der Kraft des Auftrages: Gehet hin in alle Welt und verkündigt das Evangelium aller Kreatur! Das Evangelium ist der neue Mensch. Und so ist der Neue Mensch der Sinn der Existenz der Kirche. Kirche ist da, wo der Versuch gemacht wird, die Wirklichkeit der Botschaft Gehör, Nachdenken, Respekt, Verständnis zu verschaffen ...". (s. 10)

Moltmann's answer of course will be, You're speaking of "the New Creation", not of "the creation"; the Sabbath is "the Sabbath of the creation". And we shall reply in the same way, "We're not talking of the creation, but of the New Creation when we talk about God's Sabbath Rest.

What Barth says, in Paul's words, is, "The glory of God in the face of Jesus!" ... **IN ALL CREATION!** Barth's locale of the event "to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever", is the Church ... the **CHURCH OF ALL CREATION**. Moltmann's locale of this event is the Sabbath Day. Barth's locale is **THROUGH ALL CREATION**. So we have in perfect harmony – the chief end of human beings of all time, in all creation and through all history, is to glorify God and to enjoy Him

forever ... “*Pre-eminently on the Sabbath*”, says Moltmann; in “*the Church*” pre-eminently, says Barth. “*In the world*”, says Barth. And so says Moltmann, “*Because the glory of God – in the face of Jesus – applies explicitly to the Sabbath, it interpenetrates the whole of everyday life and all the labours of the world*”.

The “*Message*” of the glory that belongs to God in the face of Jesus as the chief aim of human beings’ existence, is the **Sabbath’s, Christian**, meaning and no mere **creation**-meaning as according to Moltmann. Moltmann’s statement because it **lacks, Christ**, as Object, as Subject, as Content, and as Message, is self-destructive. Moltmann’s “*sabbath of the creation*” lacks Christ as the Fountain-Head of the Glory that is God’s. The Sabbath consequently is bereaved of its **only worth** (“*theological basis*” – Webster) – which is, **to be**, the *Message-Day* and the Assembling-Place of the *New Human Being* Who is God’s very Glory – the Sabbath’s **only worth** of service and for being servant to the Servants of the Servant of the Lord. The Sabbath’s **only worth** is facilitating the Visiting and most intimate *Presence* of God with human beings and their world “**in Spirit and in Truth**” – the facilitating for the **worship and the glory** of the Coming God-With-Us. Our presence with God is God’s presence with us – Emmanuel! This end the Sabbath indeed has served throughout creation, throughout creation’s history, and throughout the culmination of both creation and history in the Word of God and Light of the world that has tabernacled among us – even Jesus Christ. This the Sabbath has always facilitated and perpetually again will do, week after week, even in the immortal and everlasting glorified resurrection life upon the New Earth. For God shall not forsake the works of his hands. He shall not –for the sake of Jesus Christ; for the sake of His Name – God With Us! “Come Lord Jesus, come!” is his Church praying on the Lord’s Day for the Day of the Lord.

In the Church, however, where ‘*the chief end*’ of human beings – **pre-eminently and explicitly** – is ‘to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever’, that *glory* is **NOT applied to the Sabbath**, but, to the **First Day** of the week.

**NO** *Message* of the *New Human Being* in whose face God forever enjoys his glory is heard. **NO** *interpenetration* of the glory of God in the face of the *New Human Being* into the *whole of everyday life and all the labours of the world* is seen.

Lip-service is all it is paid the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath is become an ornament in stead of an ordinance. And this is what Moltmann’s “*useful practical step*” proposed on p. 296 also amounts to. “*Saturday evening devotions*” are just “*worship on Sunday*” without due respect to the Bible and creation-Sabbath’s duration that would be over by the time of day Moltmann recommends for a little

Sabbath’s window dressing. (But we must still get there.)

As if forced to by his previous statement, Moltmann continues, “... *What is special about the sabbath commandment is, on the one hand, the remembrance of God’s eternal sabbath of creation, from which the command to sanctify the sabbath springs; and, on the other, the promise of the eternal sabbath of the messianic era*”.

Again at first sight beautiful things said about the Sabbath! But after just basic thought, quite mixed up and worthless. Not the creation-story recounts the remembrance of the Sabbath – it is the Sinai-story that does so. The sanctification of the Sabbath came not in the first place by its Sinai institution as Law. The initial sanctification or hallowing of the Sabbath’s creation, was **God’s direct and own**. Its sanctification was God’s work of the Seventh Day of creation-week. The Sabbath’s sanctification **originally** depended on the “Sabbath-**REST**” of which **God** was the Subject **and** the Object. **God’s** positive, active activity of **Rest, caused**, the Sabbath – **was**, its “rest”; **called**, its existence, **gave**, its blessing, **decreed**, its sanctification – **underwrote**, its universal validity. With these the Works of God He “the Seventh Day finished”. These are the works of God that are the works He finished with, “the Seventh Day”. But none of these works, be they ever so finished, ever so fulfilled, ever so perfect – they came forth and they went forth as by God’s eye fixed on the Word of God, on the Son in Whom He – as formerly – in these last days, spoke! And be they ever so fulfilled, ever so finished, ever so perfect – they come forth and they go forth as by God’s eye fixed on the Word of God, on the Son in Whom – as Resurrected from the dead – God still speaks, Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts! Thus God today still creates. God today creates his Body – He creates his glory in the face of Jesus. The division of days thus established by God Himself to Himself in a Resting of His own, *interpenetrated the whole of everyday life and all the labours of the world*.

God’s works of the creation in the language of the New Testament became the “week” – a word that totally depends on the word-idea of God’s “Sabbath-Rest” – *sabbaton*. The Sabbath’s sanctification results not from man’s keeping of the Sabbath or even from God’s command to man to sanctify the Sabbath. It originated through creation – first- and origin-creation – God’s creation of heaven and earth and all that in them is “in six days” according to the Sinai recount. From there originated the command to “remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy”.

*What is special about the Sabbath – before any commandment – is, the sanctification of God’s Sabbath-Rest of creation’s temporal, “Seventh Day” – from which the Commandment to sanctify the Sabbath, springs – thus investing the creation-Sabbath with the promise of the content and reality of the Sabbath of the messianic era.* The standard-

setting sequence of order is: **Creation**-Sabbath derives its worth and meaning from its anti-type the **Christian** Sabbath; and the Sabbath of the **Law** derives its worth and meaning from both the Christian Sabbath and the creation-Sabbath.

Which makes impossible any other day than the Seventh Day Sabbath to be the Christian Day of Worship-Rest.

*What is special about the Sabbath, is **God's Rest** on it – from which Rest the **command** to sanctify the Sabbath springs. What is special about the Sabbath, is messianic **Redemption** – from which the Sabbath of prophetic promise, springs. What is special about the Sabbath, is **God's** explicit faithfulness to Word of Oath in raising Jesus Christ from the dead. What is special about the Sabbath is God's oath wherewith He confirmed **THIS** his New Creation Faithfulness to the former People of Israel in having lifted them out of Egypt and into the land of the living. **This** – its **Christian** content and promise – is *the creation sabbath's* unique and "*special*" meaning **too**. No Sabbath has any special meaning other than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The creation Sabbath wasn't special for this, the Exodus Sabbath for that, and the New Creation Sabbath for another speciality. God is One; his works are one and so his Rest. The Day of God's celebrating his Rest, is one! The more so in that it is all one in Christ – Christ who is the fullness of the time. (What an insult to the fullness of divine completion and rest to grant it no Seventh Day of remembrance, celebration and sanctity, but – can any believe it – one or two of another day's wee hours!)*

It throughout considering these things – the glory of God – is possible to speak of only the Seventh Day and Sabbath. Therefore also does Hebrews 4:4-5 mention but the Seventh Day in connection with **God's Sabbath-speaking**. Therefore also and throughout, the Bible **never** speaks of an "*eternal*" Sabbath. The Sabbath from its very *pre-eminence* and *explicitness*, is this temporary, "Seventh Day" of creation-week that never is an "*eternal*" future, never, an "*eternal*" present, but always "remains valid" this present down to earth, human, weekly Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God wherein He the New Creation Man unites and confers with men of the Body that is Christ's. He meets you there! He won't meet you in His Body elsewhere. He shall meet you being the Head whereunto his Body holds – the Head his Body by joints and bands receive nourishment ministered, and, knit together, increases with the increase of God. (Eph.2:19) God meets you this Sabbath in holy Congregation to his glory. This Sabbath in the Church to the glory of God – man's chief aim in life. Meet you there the Seventh Day, because so God created and finished his creation and his redemption. The Sabbath, because so God redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the world He so loved He gave His only

begotten Son. May Israel see the day that is God's doing and rejoice and glory God because He on the Sabbath Day planted them in the Land of his Promise. So why may not we? Why may the People of God not rejoice and glory God that He in Sabbath's time approaching the First Day, pulled Christ from the dead and put Him on the shores of the land of the living? I'm going to meet my Lord this Sabbath Day – He willing. Israel of God shall rejoice and worship in awe and wonderment at such grace and love!

*"The Sabbath commandment ... divides up human time. It brings interruption, interval and rhythm into human temporal experience. But of course all other 'festal' divisions of time do this too. What is special about the sabbath commandment ..."?*

Of interest here is that, although it may not be of importance to any who dislike '*biblicist*' understanding of the Scriptures, it is common knowledge that all "*festal' divisions of time*" in the Old Testament "floated" through the week because they were all bound up with the seasons – except the Sabbath Day. The Passover's Feast Day of 15 Nisan, for example, could fall on any day of the week as it by co-incidence could also have fallen on the weekly Sabbath. So during the Old Testament times the Feast of Sabbath Rest the Seventh Day had no relation to the seasonal "feasts". **But** – as has been illustrated in Part One of *The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace* – there are two things very *special* about the Sabbath that are not commonly known. The first is the Sabbath's un failing involvement with the great moments of redemption in Israel's history. Best known of course is the Passover-Sabbath's introduction into the Fourth Commandment. Now herein lies a least known and *special* feature or fact about the Sabbath. The day of Israel's actual stepping out of the Red Sea and on the Promised land's soil, is **literally calculable** – it actually was the Sabbath Day!

But the most astonishing *special* fact about the "*festal' divisions of time*" of the Old Testament, is this: They all in their very last "Old" dispensation occurrence – which at the same time was their very first "New" dispensation occurrence – **concurred on the Sabbath Day!** In the midst of the Yom Yahweh it is the Sabbath that as the Day of God's Completion-Rest is creation's Day of New Creation – the first day of the "messianic era"!

But this by the way. I today leave the meaning of this for spontaneous re-iteration.

Let us now see how Moltmann arrives at his conclusion that "*the Sabbath belongs to the cycle of human time*". We have already referred to the nature of time and the relation God has revealed towards human time – that it was his freedom of love and mercy that let God make ("make" – not merely to accept, but to create) "human" time, His time, and "human"

cycles of time, His cycles – just as it was God’s freedom of love and mercy – His “*resolve*” – that let Him take up in Jesus Christ the flesh and the nature and the being – and everything of man – except sin. And of Jesus Christ, God the Father says: “This is My Son”. Jesus’ body of “*human being*” was God’s! Thus God’s making “*human time*” His time, means His time is divine time – it is God’s time! Now whether or not we speak of the Sabbath as “*human time*” – it makes no difference to its “*nature*” or its “*belonging*”. “The Seventh Day is **the Sabbath Day of the LORD your God**” – “The Seventh Day is the Sabbath Day **and belongs to** the LORD your God”. It is its nature – it is the Day of God’s Rest – every week. The Sabbath Day itself is not God’s Rest – it is the Day **of** God’s Rest – the Seventh Day **belongs to** God’s Rest; it belongs to **Christ**, Who **is**, God’s Rest. Therefore the Sabbath is not only called the Lord’s Day – it **is** the Lord’s Day. This Word of Scripture – “The Sabbath Day of the LORD your God” – defies all human difficulties with understanding time as God’s time while it also is man’s time. It shall stay within the bounds set to it by the proprietary ownership and limitation of God’s prophetic **Word** – and, by God’s Word of **Scripture**, *Fundamentalist*, *biblicist*, or not. The Bible is more than ‘*Jewish*’ **or** ‘*Christian*’! (Chapter 3, 1, p. 53) What is ‘*Christian*’ if it lifts not up Christ? What is the Sabbath if it lifts not up Christ?

*“What is special about the sabbath commandment is ... (that) the promise of the eternal sabbath of the messianic era ... means that though ... the sabbath belongs to the cycle of human time, its nature allows it to break through the cyclical rebirth of natural time by prefiguring the messianic time.”*

In the end the providence and predestination of God brought together in **synchronised event of act**, nature’s and divine and human time, “**in Sabbath’s time**” – when God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead, Christ in life and flesh and body **in glory** – the Son of Man the Lord of hosts.

*“The sabbath is part of the cycle of the week, and yet, by virtue of the promise which, in mode of anticipation, it already fulfils, it is the sign of the coming freedom ...”*. How disappointing to continue “*... it is the sign of the coming freedom ... from time’s cyclical course*”! What is this? Is it freedom from the **weekly cyclical course of time**? Then it is untrue that the Sabbath is the sign of freedom from it. For we – of the messianic age – **are bound** to the weekly cyclical course of time whether we like it or not. And even the Church while it decided to free itself from the Sabbath decided to keep itself **bound** to the weekly cyclical course of time in order to be **bound** still to the weekly day of **Sunday**. It is easy from the freedom we **do** have, to speak of another freedom as **though** we have it. **Truth** is, the freedom Christians serve under, is no freedom **yet**

from **earthly** existence and from Christian responsibility to the **Scriptures** and our Christian **heritage** – our original apostolic heritage – and never **will** be. Not even on the New Earth – the New Earth and the state of glory – not even then. For Christianity is still bound to the “*Jewish*” weekly *cyclical course of time*. Only difference is, it is not “*Jewish*” – never had been; it is “*creation’s*” – God’s original creation’s. That, it will be in the New Creation of glorified immortality. “*Immortality*” ... **of what?** Immortality of **creation** – of God’s intended, *resolved*, creation **realised in New Creation!** And therefore the **present** “*coming freedom*” of the *messianic* age or Christ-Dominion brought no and intended no freedom “*... from time’s cyclical course*”. Not time or its cycles is the problem with creation. Its only problem is its Christ-lessness – its sin. The day the Christian is freed from time or its cycles will be the day he dies because of sin.

But the “*cyclical rebirth of natural time*” – in contradistinction to the week which is based on the return of the Sabbath on the Seventh Day of every creation week – has been *broken through*. Nature’s, or, “*creation’s*” own deliverance from death has been availed and guaranteed in and by the death and resurrection of Jesus from the dead. “For God so loved His world” ... God so loved the works of His hands, that when He redeemed man, He redeemed his world! The “*cyclical rebirth of natural time*” has no function in or meaning for the Christian Faith. All dying and death for redemption, Christ supplied!

Like the sound barrier to movement, the “*cyclical rebirth of natural time*” to Christian Worship no longer is an obstacle. But if we like *human beings* walk, we still must go step by step and use our feet and legs and body. So when we as *human beings* worship, we must worship Sabbath by Sabbath and forsake not the assembling but preach the Word and use the Sacraments and the whole Body of Communion. It is the *status quo* – not arbitrarily, but by the constitution of the Body that is Christ’s. God so wills to be worshiped; God so wills His glory – His glory in the face of Jesus – “**on earth as it is in heaven**”. “*The sabbath stands in time, but it is more than time, for it both veils and discloses an eternal surplus of meaning.*”

“*An eternal surplus of meaning*” except, “*New Creation*” meaning – except Jesus Christ! The “*eternal surplus of meaning*” that “*the sabbath both veils and discloses*” though, **is Christ** and **should** be Christ! Moltmann too should not neglect this connection!

Nevertheless, claims Moltmann, “*The sabbath is not a day of creation, it is the Lord’s Day.*” (Last line, p. 280) “*... the sabbath is also one of the divine names.*” (line 13) “*... it is only the sabbath that is the revelation of God self.*” (line 29) *Only* ... no meaning that might imply Christ or the work of Christ or the peace and rest that that brings along!

Moltmann's is non stop yet empty rhetoric – the idolisation of the Sabbath day.

It is impossible to see the necessity of it. What is in it for Moltmann? What does it help theology? What does practical Christian faith in any sphere of life benefit from it? And what does it contribute to restitution of *the creation*? It stays *worthless service* because it is not a *response* to the *going before* of God in Jesus Christ!

It is **not** true that *“the sabbath is not a day of creation”*, because it is “the Seventh Day” of God's **one act of creating** the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, **the act of** His sanctification, **the act of** His blessing, **the act of** His finishing and **the act of** His Rest ... **“on”**, and **to**, **“the Seventh Day”!** – **By reason of being the Creator**, *the sabbath* – in the context of the creation and of God's **one creative act** – *is the Lord's Day!* With this we don't say what Moltmann says, that it is not Christ the Lord's Day, but just the opposite – that if not Christ the Lord's Day in creation and by creation already and eschatologically, it is Judaism's day and of no standing in the Christian Faith. **By reason of God's being the Redeemer**, *the sabbath* – in the context of the redemption and God's act of *New Creation* – since its inception *is the Lord's Day* ... *“ultimately”!*

The Sabbath may *both veil and disclose* the *divine* Name of God, but it is **not** true that it *“is one of the divine names”*. **Jesus Christ** *sine qua non* is all the Names of God. The Sabbath – since Christ was in creation – *both veils and discloses* His Name – the *divine* Name of God – in the creation as the New and Redeemed creation.

It is **not** true that *“only the sabbath is the revelation of God self”*. Again, **Jesus Christ** *sine qua non* is all the revelation of God and of God's *“self”*.

Why not allow **Jesus Christ** *sine qua non* the Sabbath's *“eternal surplus of meaning”*?

**BECAUSE THEN SUNDAY CANNOT BE ALLOWED IT!**

**BECAUSE THEN SUNDAY CANNOT BE THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD!**

**BECAUSE THEN SUNDAY CANNOT BE THE FIRST DAY OF GOD'S NEW CREATION!**

**BECAUSE THEN THE SABBATH DAY SHOULD BE IT IN STEAD!**

**SO ALL THE SMOOTH TALK ABOUT THE SABBATH IS SERVICE OF NO WORTH!**

Moltmann's theology of the creation and the Sabbath is only true when **reversed!** By illustration I refer to p. 278 again, *“We shall use ... elements of the sabbath as the Jewish understanding of God's revelation comprehends them, and shall then use these as a point of departure from which to work out the messianic elements of the sabbath which emerge*

*from the Christian understanding of God's revelation. For it is from this, ultimately, that the long-neglected problem about the connection between Sunday and the Sabbath arises.”*

First create the problem; then work it out. First conclude the outcome; then reach it. That, surely, is not scientific practice. In the language of the science of the theology that is said not to be ethical. So let's take this passage and see how it could be re-arranged so as to answer to 'Christian' methodology,

*We shall use elements of the Sabbath as the Christian understanding of God's revelation comprehends them, and shall then use these as a point of departure from which to work out the messianic elements of the Sabbath which emerge from the understanding of God's **prophetic and eschatological** revelation in Jesus Christ. For it is from this that the messianic elements of the Sabbath ultimately arise and emerge.* It is this *problem* – *the long-neglected connection between the “Old Testament Sabbath” and the “New Testament Sabbath” – which the Gospels from the “Christian” point of view, are concerned with in depth!*

This is no 'problem' of one's fancy like *“the connection between Sunday and the Sabbath”*. It has its precedent in the New Testament Scriptures and therefore is the only legitimate 'problem' for 'Christian' consideration and *understanding*. Its outcome or conclusion is, in fact, already evident, because it had been reached in the Gospels. Our task is to search and to put in place and in practice its rich treasure – to put its *worth to service*. *“The sabbath both veils and discloses an eternal surplus of meaning.”* The Christian must only keep in mind it is the Sabbath – not the Sunday – that the Scriptures thus explore, exploit, procure and **appropriate** for the Christian Faith and Church!

#### 7.7.1.11.

#### **The Sabbath in Time and Fulfilment, or, The Sabbath in Cosmic and Eschatological Centrality**

People of Sunday-persuasion are the ones who are obsessed with “the letter” – that not even the letter of the Law! They insist on the letter rather than on grace and the Gospel, because there is nothing in all the Scriptures that would give any reason **to expect** the **First** Day of the week **in the end** where God's plan and act of redemption are brought to **co-incidence**. Yet people of Sunday-persuasion (like Moltmann) won't let go of the letter of **two words** in their only and 'translated' occurrence – *“after”*, or, *“beyond”* (the Sabbath), and, *“on”* ... the First Day”. They insist on the letter, *“After the Sabbath on the First Day”*, **yet** they say, *“every Sabbath is an anticipation of the world's redemption”*. They insist on the letter of *“on the First Day”*, **yet**, *“when the messianic era which*

*He (Christ) proclaimed*” and which showed “*every Sabbath is an anticipation of the world’s redemption*” “*was actually initiated*”, then they confer all logic and truth, all prophecy and fulfilment, “*on the First Day of the week*”, and not on the Sabbath!

*God in Creation*, p. 286, par. 4, “*The sabbath is part of the cycle of the week, and yet, by virtue of the promise which, in the mode of anticipation, it already fulfils, IT is the sign of the coming freedom ...*”. (Emphasis CGE)

The *promise* and the *coming freedom* both are Jesus Christ – He the incarnate, and He the returning. The *promise* and the *coming freedom* both are God’s Rest – fully come and realised – *already fulfilled* – even Jesus Christ and He as the Resurrection of Life! The Sabbath is Cosmic-Eschatological Sign of it! “*In the mode of anticipation*” the Sabbath “*already fulfils the promise*” of the Christ – Christ **has** come. “*And by virtue of*” this the Good News of Jesus Christ the Fullness of the “*promise*”, the Sabbath “*is the sign of the coming freedom*” – Christ **shall** come.

Yet the First Day receives the benefit, praises and honour.

“*The sabbath is part of the cycle of the week*”. It is **more** than it: The Sabbath is cosmic eschatological “*sign*” – it **rules** “*the cycle of the week*”. The Sabbath rules the weeks of the past, present and future of all created and redeemed life. By the authority invested it by God – sovereignly with man in view through Jesus Christ. That’s how it happened the Seventh Day was blessed, sanctified and, **on it**, all God’s works were finished even in and through and by the Rest of **God Himself**. The Seventh Day rules the week, **not** “*by virtue of*” cosmic “*principalities*” like Saturn, but in its own right and by virtue of its eschatological and cosmic determination which is a divine endowment of special approval (“*blessing*” or grace), transcendence (“*holiness*” or mercy), consummation (“*completion*” or faithfulness) and perfection (“*rest*” or the peace of God’s love).

Both these functions of the Sabbath (of *fulfilling the promise* and being *the sign of the coming freedom*), Moltmann would not allow to be so inserted into his statement. But they are essential of and indispensable to the Sabbath. For Moltmann the rest of God’s Sabbath Day must not mean the peace of Christ’s Lordship, must not contain it, point to it, proclaim it, must not derive from it, and drive at it, and live from and of that peace of God’s love.

But without these characteristic functions the Sabbath is nothing, however one may attribute to it the *virtues* of *creation* and morality, Law and all man’s enjoyments and employments of it.

“*The sabbath stands in time, but it is more than time, for it both veils and discloses an eternal surplus of meaning.*”

The Sabbath first appears in the Scriptures as a **pure statement of faith of Divine event** – it doesn’t meet us in the first place as **Law**. Its first appearance contains **no** command **or** prohibition. Its first appearance is of **God acting** in mercy, by grace, unto faithfulness and for love – God, acting in creation.

Yet, for Moltmann that *eternal surplus of meaning* of the Sabbath’s, not even “*by virtue of the promise*”, not even by virtue “*of the coming freedom*”, can mean the *eternal surplus* of God’s Power in raising Christ from the dead! That is most surprising! The Sabbath’s “*eternal surplus of meaning*” cannot prevent **the loss of its** eschatological worth and service to the **First** Day of the week?

“*Instead!*” ... “*Instead!*” of the fact that “*(t)he sabbath stands in time, but it is more than time*”, “*instead!*” that “*it both veils and discloses an eternal surplus of meaning*”, indeed “*(i)instead of a Sabbath on which man bows down to the Lord of time*”, we find that “*the biblical Sabbath symbolises man’s victory over time*”.

What does this mean? If anything, it means an anticlimax without par! This is what the reasoning here itself creates in expectancy: “*Wie laaste lag is Skoppensboer!*” is the axiom of logic and justice. But, *instead of a Sabbath on which man bows down to the lord of time even death, the biblical Sabbath symbolises God’s victory over death* the lord of time **for man the sinner** and his world! God’s Rest of and on the Seventh Day *both veils and discloses THAT eternal surplus of meaning!* But Moltmann punctures his own perfectly prepared cake in the process of its baking and testing so that it flops flat and cannot be restored for the eating – in which the proof of the pudding lies.

God is “*the Lord of time*” **through victory** over death in Jesus Christ, or **death** is the lord of time. Christ’s coming “in the fullness of time” culminated in God’s victory for the sake of his own time and creation. Christ conquered the prince of death and sin the very contradiction of peace and time and being. Then surely there is nothing wrong with *bowing down* to Him on the Sabbath Day because He on the Sabbath Day in conquering **saved, even time!**

Or does Moltmann mean **man** succeeded in **destroying the Sabbath**? I think so, because we find “*man’s victory over time*”, “*instead of a Sabbath*”. “*Man’s victory over time*” must mean “*the Sabbath symbolises*” its **own destruction!**

**If not** Jesus Christ and He the Resurrected from the dead is the most sublime of the **Sabbath’s** “*eternal surplus of meaning*”, **then**, Jesus Christ and He the Resurrected from the dead **must** be the Sabbath’s death-knell! Let Sabbatharians face this implication squarely. If they allow the Sundaydarians the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, they surrender all and all argument to them; they’ll have gravel for their



sojourning of the Gilboan wilderness. **But if** Jesus Christ and He the Resurrected from the dead indeed **is** the satisfaction of that “*eternal surplus of the Sabbath’s meaning*”, **then**, “*time*” is **not** “*suspended*”, is not “*conquered*”, but – like the *creation as a whole* – is established, founded and confirmed for eternity **on Jesus Christ and on Him the Resurrected who conquered death and timelessness! Then**, “*time*” is for eternity established, founded and confirmed **to the cycle of time determined by the Sabbath Day, namely, to the cycle of the week which shall imply God’s eternal rule because the Sabbath isn’t ruled by “cosmic powers” but by God!**

Man gained no “*victory over time*”. He precisely **in time**, by grace is accounted *victory over sin and death!* This is the life Christ obtained for man – the life of immortality **within time** and physical life. Although we don’t know what we shall be when resurrected in the resurrection – we do know we shall not be spirits, but shall be **resurrected** – and like Jesus, shall be resurrected **in the flesh** as our confession says. In the resurrection God also gains for his **creation**, *victory* – **in time** – not *victory* “from” time or “*over*” time! The problem lies not with time, but with sin and death – **with timelessness!**

Says Moltmann, “*time is eliminated, ... there is no time ... the biblical Sabbath symbolises man’s victory over time ... time is suspended ... death is suspended ...*”. Shear nonsense!

**No!** *time is NOT eliminated* – time goes on without pause. No sequence of days and no cosmic time are disturbed – not even the seasons. But the seasons will be adjusted to the new moon of the new earth. For the new moon of every fourth Sabbath Day the Tree of Life shall bear its fruit.

On the New Earth time and seasons will be normalised and synchronised. Yet it will be real like the New Earth and the resurrection into eternal life will be real. That may be ‘*biblicist*’, but non the less true of the promises of the Scriptures.

*The biblical Sabbath symbolises man’s victory* in Jesus Christ and through Him, *man’s victory IN time* – not “*over time*”. *Time is VINDICATED – God’s CREATION is vindicated – in LIFE! Death is suspended – death is DESTROYED, sin and grave are disturbed and vanquished – timelessness is destroyed!* *The biblical Sabbath symbolises victory IN time!* Christ’s victory is real and **reality** – it belongs to creation – and to time and to **days of God’s creation**. For no reason can time or days be *suspended* or superseded – not as long as God is the Creator and Saviour of it. Christ’s victory is God’s finishing of the Seventh Day – Christ’s victory is God’s Sabbath Rest – it was wrought by Christ once, for all, *i.e.*, finally and eternally. Christ Jesus within time vindicated the Sabbath for eternity!

Therefor Christ’s is man’s victory and does a rest of the Sabbath remain for the People of God which is the Body of Christ. “*The Ecclesia – Cosmic Eschatological Sign*” (F. Theron) – **The-Body-Which-Is-Christ’s is the manifestation of God’s Sabbath’s-finishing “to us-ward” when He raised Him from the dead, “in Sabbath’s time”.**

Man’s rest has the opposite effect of what Moltmann suggests! Says Moltmann, “*the biblical Sabbath symbolises man’s victory over time*”. And he means it in the sense that “*time is eliminated*”, that “*there is no time*” any more. Which, plainly, is untrue and unreal. And this impossible feat of *eliminating* time, man *victoriously* avails by “*no work*”, by “*stopping interference*”, simply. Moltmann could just as well have said man successfully destroyed creation – all by himself and even by his doing absolutely nothing. Which is improving on the devil who with his utmost best could not. Which is improving on God, who, at least, had to do something to bring creation into being – He had to speak the Word of His Power. But man annihilates creation – time is creation – by doing nothing. And man’s *eliminating* of time is reckoned as no “*disturbance*”! Man is thus glorified above God and God’s Sabbath Day is lowered lower than the realms of idolatry (lower than the idol *Saturn* in the context here in *GC*) and lower than even *death*. Man is glorified and the Sabbath Day is *suspended* so as to have it degraded and desecrated **infinitely**.

To strictly **cosmically** show the Sabbath respect – strictly in terms of an *ecological theology of creation* – is to not respect the Sabbath at all. Not to respect the Sabbath according to its due honour of being the **cosmic eschatological** sign and day of God’s grace, mercy, faithfulness and love in Jesus Christ in the perfection and peace of his resurrection from the dead, is to **dishonour** the Sabbath Day – to trample it under foot. This sort of regard for the Sabbath Day has everything in common with the legalistic appreciation of the Sabbath Day. **It is nothing better.**

Says Moltmann, Jesus “*raised working days into the messianic festivity of life, of which Israel’s sabbath is a unique foretaste*”. The Sabbath is degraded to lower than the rank of ‘*working day*’ because it is but the “*foretaste*” – not the reality – of the *festive* character which the *working days* would receive in **reality!** The Sabbath is not abolished, says Moltmann. It must remain, but with no distinction from “*the whole of life*” which should be a “*messianic festivity of life*”. Moltmann’s is but the old idea of ‘*every day is our Sabbath*’, or, ‘*every day should be a Sabbath*’, or, ‘*every day should be like a Sabbath*’, decorated with pietistic human virtues.

*“Saturn is dethroned on his very day, Saturn’s day”.*

Moltmann’s is but a mute way of putting the blame of idolatry on the Sabbath and its keepers in order to excuse the idolatry that Sunday has become in Christianity. Saturn is a planet; the planet is God’s creation – not its name. And Saturn the idol is man’s creation – not God’s. The day of the Sabbath NEVER belonged to Saturn; Saturn never knew the earth’s days; Saturn never wore the Sabbath-crown. Man’s rest on the Sabbath Day cannot mean that *“Saturn is dethroned on his very day, Saturn’s day”*. The Sabbath is “the LORD thy God’s” – it belongs to Him; to say it is Saturn’s *“very day”* is to beyond description desecrate the Lord’s Day.

But, *“Saturn is dethroned on his very day, Saturn’s day”!* Say it with exclamation and say it rejoicing! For Jesus Christ in fact dethroned Saturn *“on his very day”*. Human beings enthroned Saturn on the Lord’s own Day – have made him the lord of the day that Yahweh calls “My Holy Day”. But Jesus Son of Man and Son of God is Victor over every “principality and rule” – also over Saturn and the hosts of him who brings gloom on Yahweh’s Day, for on the day of the honour and veneration of Saturn God placed honour and veneration back where it belongs – and crowned His Holy Day with the Honour of His Holy One. “In Sabbath’s-time”, “He upon His Own Rest did enter indeed AS GOD from His Own Work”!

The days which God created for this earth He crowned or *enthroned* with the Sabbath Day because He crowned and *enthroned* this earth with his Throne of Grace. God crowned and *enthroned* this earth above all “heavenly places” and “every principality” within His *creation*. The Sabbath Day is **cosmic** Day of God. The earth – **eschatologically** – is the centre of the universe, the Throne and Footstool of God’s **total cosmic** Rule and Kingdom! God of all days and of all cosmic times and cycles of time, crowned the Seventh Day of this earth’s rotation with the unique honour of being created the eschatological sign of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Every Sabbath of the cosmic and creation-week, man shall know that in it God Rested – in the Son – in whom He is well pleased. **This, the Sabbath Day of the New Creation and also of the New Earth – or no Sabbath Day for the Christian Faith!**

‘New Creation’ – the present eschatological time of Christ’s Body on earth; ‘New Earth’ – the future eschatological time of Christ’s Body on earth.

*“Death is suspended and life rules on the Sabbath day.”*

For Moltmann this means that **death** is **prolonged** on the Sabbath: only on the **First** Day of the week is the death-knell of death sounded. Says he, *“On the sabbath day recollection of God’s creation sabbath and the promise of the messianic era lead **beyond the day itself**, and on that*

*day”* – on the day **“beyond”**, that is, on the First Day of the week – *“(recollection and promise) burst apart the law of time.”* *“Recollection of God’s creation sabbath”*, *“and the promise of the messianic era”*, together, avail the *bursting apart* of the law of time. It means both *“recollection of God’s creation sabbath”* *“and the promise of the messianic era”* are the exercises and attainment of the day **“beyond”** the Sabbath Day, namely, of the First Day. The *Saturdarian* who reckons Moltmann has the Sabbath in mind is mistaken.

*“The law of time”* is *“burst apart”* through some synergetic effort on the part of both man and God. Man, through *“recollection of God’s creation sabbath”*, and God, through *“promise of the messianic era”*, *“burst apart the law of time”*. The *“promise of the messianic era”* only arrives, “after the Sabbath, on the First Day of the week”, as Matthew 28:1 is ‘translated’. Moltmann says what tradition has always said. But he also maintains the Sabbath is not abrogated. It’s all talk, and talk is cheap. The First Day in Moltmann’s mind – in plain language – replaced the Sabbath despite his denying it. It is one thing to say the Sabbath wasn’t abolished. It is not another thing, but the **same** thing to say *“the promise of the messianic era lead beyond the day itself*, and the Sunday is the *“Feast of the Beginning”*. No! *The promise of the messianic era lead to the day itself*, so that the **Sabbath Day**, is the *Feast of the Beginning* – of the New Dispensation, of the Christian era. How? In that “It was Sabbath’s time”, and in that it was God, in the exceeding greatness of His Power creating His rest of eternal finishing when He raised Christ from the dead.

From these and several impossible attempts of Moltmann to maintain both Sabbath and Sunday as sacred Christian days, stems his concept of the *‘bursting apart’* of time. If time were to *“burst apart”*, **so would creation**. Time, space and matter in the form of heavenly bodies are a single coherent and inter-dependent entity in the constitution of time and life. Without time, no worlds, no life; without worlds or life, no time – no days. What in the Bible is unique about time and days and worlds and life, is not time’s relation to physical things, but the **unconditioned** cycle of life and days, the **creation-week** – this is unique of the Bible. It has nothing in common with Marduk’s *vanquishing of the monster* Tiamat – “*The song of the creation*”, *Enuma elish*, referred to p. 105, Chapter 5, “*The Time of Creation*”. It is not *“the periodically recurring festival of origin”* of this pagan myth that *“divides up time into weeks”*. The number, sequence, chronology and order of preference (hierarchy) of the days that constitute the week – this cycle of time ruled by the Seventh Day and life – are conditioned and decided by nothing but God’s revelation in creating and in redeeming life! The Christian Scriptures of the Bible Old and New Testament are its only source of cognitive

knowledge – the Sabbath Day the Seventh Day of the week and life – human, even of redeemed human life – being its only determinative point of reference.

Moltmann's idea that man could destroy ("*burst apart*") this phenomenon of time and life, simply is incomprehensible. The Sabbath in fact, is eternally connected with "*time's cyclical course*". It is eternally connected with the "*cyclical course*" of the Sabbath's re-occurrence every **Seventh DAY** as perceived by human intelligence, but only by the intelligence of redeemed human life! The Sabbath never has been and never would be "*the sign of the coming freedom from time's cyclical course*" because that would have implied the Sabbath was meant for the unbelievers. The Sabbath has meaning only in that it has eschatological meaning --in that it sees Jesus Christ and God's salvation of time and of man through Him and in Him. All unsaved creation – all the 'fallen' world without grace are *free from time's cyclical course* marked and ruled by God's Sabbath Day. It may use it on its calendars and for its industry and profits – but it is unknown to the cosmos of worldliness for serving God in his revelation of providence and saving love.

In fact – in fact of real human existence on this planet earth – this time cycle of days of the week, "rules" more effectively than any of the many seasonal or "natural" festivals found in all cultures and human enterprises. The week and its ruling day the Seventh Day and Sabbath as a unit is indestructible because its Lord also is its Creator who acted in his single Word of Life, Jesus Christ. Never could the Lord's Day of the New Creation be another than the Day on which the LORD your God "finished", "blessed", "sanctified" and "rested". It is the Day of God's Arrival. It was the Day of The Coming God when He first created, when he first redeemed, when He finally redeemed, and when He at last will redeem the work of his hands.

Nothing could ever *burst apart* the week's, **seven days** "*restriction*" or the Sabbath's, "**Seventh-Day**" "*restriction*" because it is based on God's Word that stands forever. "*Restriction*" is Barth's word. The Sabbath for Barth is a *restriction* or "*border*" (*die Grenze*) of and to the **Church** of its "*Arbeit*"! See e.g. his *Ethics*, 1, 1928, p. 383. Another place Barth says, "*There is no god Chronos*". *There is no god Saturn* that rules "*time's cyclical course*". How different is Barth's to Moltmann's Sabbath theology!

How could the Sabbath be "*the sign of the coming freedom*" yet "*burst apart*", and away "*from time's cyclical course*"? How could the Sabbath even *burst apart time* itself and the *cycle of time* if itself rules it? The Sabbath independently of heavenly bodies rules the divinely ordained "*cyclical course*" of "*time*" that is the week of seven days. It rules in the weekly cycle of time from its "*eternal*" position as **day of**

**God's completing act! Therefore only** is the Sabbath "*the presence in history of the future world of glory*". It as its ruling "sign" rules the week just like the sun rules the year and seasons as its ruling "sign" and the moon rules the months as its ruling "sign". **The only difference is the Sabbath is no cosmic body but purely the creation of God's will and election!** Even though the heavens and the earth may pass away, the Sabbath will not because it rests on surer basis – even the will and preference of God, and His Word which is for ever. *The Sabbath – Cosmic Eschatological Sign!*

What truism is it that the Sabbath could *burst apart time*! It simply means the Sabbath itself is exploded and demolished (– in "theology" in order to make space for the First Day to be the day of God's Finishing Rest). God's finishing rest foreshadows Jesus Christ **raised from the dead!** As truly real and actual as God's eternal present and eternal presence itself, as truly real and actual as God's faithfulness and love itself, the Sabbath is the Day **FOR** God's Rest and finishing and **OF** God's Rest and finishing. What the Sabbath **foresaw**, is what **fulfilled** it – God's Word and Truth in Jesus Christ, which, ultimately, meant the **resurrection of Jesus Christ** "in Sabbath's time"!

Because the Sabbath is the cosmic-eschatological sign between Covenanting God and covenanted partner – how else but that it would and should be the very **Day of the Covenant**? How else but that the **Sabbath Act of Law** would and should support and purport the **Sabbath Act in Deed**? If ever there was an impossibility, it is that the Sabbath was not the Day of Christ's resurrection from the dead. If ever there was an impossibility, it is that another day would be the Day of Christ's resurrection from the dead – that another day would be the Day of God's Worship-Rest.

The Sabbath does NOT "*symbolise man's victory over time*". Man's supposed "*victory over time*" would be an act of grossest sin. It would be the end of his time, yes. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the realm of **death** though – **death which is timelessness – God re-established and confirmed time** and the eternity of **time** as He re-established and confirmed His **creation and the eternity of His creation!** By strength of the Power that operated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ – which was God's Act of His Rest – and from it, the creation, and time, and the Sabbath, obtain **their** establishment and confirmation, and lives the creation-Sabbath of and by the Resurrection-Sabbath!

The Sabbath could not symbolise God's re-establishment and confirmation of time and eternity otherwise, by no other means, on no other basis, on strength of nothing else, than by the means, the basis and the strength of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, the

resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's **creating act in its very finishing and rest**.

What – **if not the Sabbath** – will *symbolise* God's victory **IN** time, **WITH** time, and even **THROUGH** time? What will **realise and fulfil** God's **accomplishment in victory**, in time, with time, and even through time **if not the resurrection of Christ?** If God acting in time, with time, and even through time in His creation, **does not show the Sabbath sees Christ**, what will? Christ and all that is Christ's make of God's Sabbath Day the rhythm of time in eternity and even "*the rhythm of eternity in time*"! So where does Sunday come from? Where has the Sabbath's gone to?

To conclude like Moltmann does, that, "*On the sabbath day recollection of God's creation sabbath and the promise of the messianic era lead **beyond** the day itself, and on that day burst apart the law of time*", **is all very wrong**.

*On the Sabbath day recollection of God's creation Sabbath and the promise of the messianic era lead **RIGHT TO** the day itself, and on that day **FULFILLS** the **true** law of time* which is the Sure Word of Creation and Prophecy – the **WORD OF GOD**. Yes indeed, "*God's creation sabbath and the promise of the messianic era lead **beyond** the day itself, and on that day*" **do not** "*burst apart the law of time*", but **surpasses all comparison**. For the Sabbath **reveals** its Rest and its Promise – the Sabbath Rest and the Promise **of God**, which **IS**, God Himself, even "God with us", "**Emmanuel!**"! The Sabbath is God's Meeting Day with man and creation. It is the day of God's Redemption-Rest. To believe redemption and salvation is to believe its reality and occurrence and that is what the Sabbath is for – to accommodate the truth of God's grace in the life of his People. The Sabbath is God's day of worship-rest – the day of the **reality of the promise** of the Messianic era. Christianity is no myth – Christianity is to believe the Covenant of Grace and to celebrate its presence and actuality among men visited by the favour of God in Christ. The Sabbath **shows** Christ – is grace first; as it shows **to** Christ – it is Law "after".

There is no "*human Sabbath*"; there is no mortal Sabbath. The Sabbath "is the day the LORD has **made**" – the Day that God has "**made** for man"! The having been "made" of the Sabbath Day should also be emphasised because that is the part **God** has had in His Sabbath Day – He is the **Creator** of His Day of Rest. The Sabbath's aspect of having been created by God even in the Law is clear in that it says, "God **made** all that is in heaven and in earth" – of which "all", the Sabbath is most important! God "made" **all** days, but none like the **Sabbath** Day. All days prepare for the Sabbath, and the Sabbath prepares for all days. On the Sabbath truth fulfils the will of God. Established for ever are the works of

His hands – the Sabbath is cosmic-eschatological sign of it. The Sabbath is cosmic-eschatological sign of the coming God-Redeemer-Creator, even of Jesus Christ – or it is a **false** sign that reads, "To Christ ...", but leads "... to Hell!"

The Sabbath has its function and purpose that gives it *worth*: it is the *worth of service* – service to God as the Covenantor and service to man as the covenanted. The Sabbath that fails its *worth of service* is a Sabbath that fails **every** expectancy. A Sabbath that fails its **Creator** cannot be the Sabbath that will draw response from **man**. A Sabbath that does not *serve* God and Man in The One – even Jesus Christ – is of no *worth* and isn't God's Sabbath Day. It has become mere rhetoric. One cannot speak of the Sabbath merely in the context of "*creation*".

It at this point has become necessary first to go back in *God in Creation* (Par. 8, 4, p. 206 on.) in order to have a look at Moltmann's ideas on *Continuous Creation*, because it is in God's continued creation that the Sabbath persists as the Christian Day of Worship-Rest.

Moltmann equates the first creation with "*the initial contingency of being itself*". So the Scriptures and good old fundamentalist Christian Faith of the Scriptures' sudden creation in the beginning and of its miraculous continuation by the power which is God's alone, are for the simple people. The better informed actually read in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning *the initial contingency of being itself* were the heavens and the earth".

"*The initial creation has to be understood as creatio mutabilis. It is not closed within itself; it is open for its history, which can bring both prediction and salvation, annihilation and consummation.*" Both creation's being and ability for change, derive from *the contingency of being itself*. Moltmann has **no need or right** to continue that, "*If God made creation to be the kingdom of his glory, then it was he who gave it movement and set it in motion, at the same time lending it an irreversible direction.*" Because of *the contingency of being itself*, it is **unnecessary** for Moltmann to say that God "*accompanies creation in this movement by opening up new possibilities, and entices it in this direction through the fellowship of his creative Spirit*". It is **of no use** to give God an afterthought or partnership in a synergism. God is not there for window-dressing. He cannot be exhibited so as to *entice in this* or that *direction the contingency of being itself*.

If things originally were *open for* or originally had the potential to open up the *possibilities of being itself* and *transience*, what need is there for God to steer or guide or "*entice*" creation further? What need is there of God's "*creative Spirit*" if "*creation ... within itself*", through "*the contingency of being itself*", "*can*", or is able – perhaps instinctively – to "*bring both prediction and salvation, annihilation and consummation*"?

God's providence and predetermination is no lesser deed requiring a lesser power than his initial creation or his continued creation. Even Moltmann's phrasing, "continuous creation", betrays an autonomous, self-initiated, self-initiating and self-continuing creation. The idea of God and God's participation is vague, and cannot be something more substantial – like the Word or Act of God – than the "Spirit". (Again, Moltmann and India?)

For "a new interpretation of the Christian doctrine of creation", Moltmann proposes "the light of the knowledge made accessible ... by evolutionary theories".

This statement rests on nothing but presumption – "knowledge" is presumed – beforehand. "Knowledge" is presumed as being "made accessible"; it is presumed, "by evolutionary theories". Then "evolutionary theories" are presumed scientific. (Why must evolution always so parade the incontestability of its superiority if it really were?) There is nothing new in Moltmann's theory of evolution. It is the same old evolution, one of pure presumption and absolutely no knowledge for the things it presupposes are neither observable nor testable – not even inferable. "Evolutionary theories", especially when "conceived of" as "God's evolutive immanence", must be groundless protesting against God's power and being and mode and way of doing – a protesting against "his world-transcendence". "Evolutionary theories" for Moltmann come ready at hand and ready-explained, proven and without question – the standing and accepted criterion for truth, logic and knowledge. "Evolutionary theories" replace God.

But what is worse is that it is "the Christian doctrine of creation" that should be given "a new interpretation" "in the light" of this "knowledge" "made accessible" "by evolutionary theories"! Indeed, Moltmann on p. 296 identifies the "world-transcendence of God" with "God's evolutive immanence in the world". Now Moltmann's "evolutive immanence" of God becomes a protesting against God's Presence and immanence in the world in and through Jesus Christ – who absolutely prohibits all *chance* and *evolutive* 'creation' or mode of creating. What has the darkness of unbelieving speculation to do with the Light of God's Word in the face of Christ?

(A sad sight in the world is to see rational and ingenious men of professed Christian faith wholly trusting to the infallibility of the 'science' of evolution and its 'proofs'. It is amazing to behold their soul-destroying, easy credulity. Surely, no one thing sends down more souls daily to scepticism and cynicism, than the content of professing scholarship with which all is left at hazard, with which the matter is taken all for granted without further search, without due trial or examination in the light of the Gospel and the Scriptures. The reader might recognise

Flavel.)

But agreed non the less, "We must distinguish more clearly than did the traditional doctrine of creation between creation in the beginning, continuous creation, and the consummation of creation in the kingdom of glory." Only: There is no need of "evolutionary theories" or of their "knowledge" for such desired improved understanding of "the Christian doctrine of creation".

Admitted, "this distinction" – of "creation in the beginning, continuous creation, and the consummation of creation in the kingdom of glory" – has to be made if we are to be able to survey ... creation as a whole. But there is no need of a "process of creation" = "continuous creation" either for "creation" or continued creation, or for an understanding of creation or for the *ability to survey it as a whole*. What is needed, is that "we shall try to think theo-logically in the context of creation" – "for **God** who" – when creating creation and when continuing creation – "commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, has shined in our hearts" – so that "in **thy** light we shall see **the light**" (Ps. 36:9) – "the light of the **knowledge**" – "the light of the knowledge of the **glory**" – "the light of the knowledge of the glory of **God**" – "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God **in the face of Jesus**" – in short, "**the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ**". This is all that is necessary — "**manifestation of the truth ... in the sight of God**", "not handling the Word of God **deceitfully**". So that, "if our gospel be hid, it be hid in them that are lost!" (2Cor.4:6,4,2,3) We shall try to think and speak **theologically** because we are **responsible** (*logos*) to **God** (*Theos*), and not to "theories". We are responsible to God *when we handle* the Gospel for the Gospel is about God in His revelation **in creation** – that is, it is about God in His revelation in Jesus Christ "in the flesh", "to us-ward"!

He is the *New Man* and the *New Creation*.

Nothing in the creation of God is "chance" or "evolutive"! Everything is determined, even pre-determined and *preconditioned*. That is Reformed Protestant *fundamentalist* Faith. This applies to the doctrine of creation as it applies to the doctrine of the Sabbath and of the Sabbath's creation. For the Sabbath **is**, creation – **God's** creation. It is not the result or product of *chance* – it is not the Seventh Day accidentally or "evolutive". Which it would have been, had the Sabbath Day not been the creation of God through Jesus Christ!

Asserts Moltmann, "The existence of the world, and then the existence of all the stages of evolution in its history, are 'chance', even if, seen theologically, they are not pure chance but an intentional fortuitousness – free creations of God for the purpose of the self-communication of his goodness, with his glorification as their end and goal. In the theological concept of God's creation, chance and the purposefulness of stages of

evolution are neither contradictions nor contrasts.” (Emphasis CGE.)

God *intended* to depend Himself on **fortuitousness!** Surely fundamentalism forms an obstacle to accepting “**chance and ... stages of evolution**” – “**free creations**” – as a means to the *end and goal* of God’s glorification to which end the Sabbath serves! Actually, according to Moltmann, *chance and fortuitousness, free God! Chance and fortuitousness* open Him up so to speak to possibilities He would not otherwise have had. God must “*for the purpose of the self-communication of his goodness*” depend on “**chance and stages of evolution**”. Then **Jesus Christ** must have been *fortuitousness* – an **accident**; an *intentional* accident may be but non the less an accident of chance – for it is through Jesus Christ that God *purposed the self-communication of his goodness*. And this is where the Sabbath is supposed to fit in!

Moltmann wants to say creation continues itself through “**chance and stages of evol+ution**”. But if God could not continue his creation **on his own**, how would He have been able to recreate anew his creation in order to exactly rid it of and save it from “*chance*” and “*fortuitousness*” and give it surety, steadfastness and eternal and immortal life and peace? How could God “rest” in the bringing into being the Sabbath of the LORD your God? *In the theological concept of God’s creation, chance and stages of evolution are neither contradictions nor contrasts* – they are *purposeless* and blasphemous.

*The existence of the world in its history is no matter of ‘chance’.* Seen theologically, God’s creation is **not** “*fortuitousness*” whether *intentional, pure, good and free* or not. *Chance and stages of evolution* not only contradict the **free** creation of God; they contradict the very purpose of God’s *self-communication* which is Jesus Christ! The Word Incarnate, the Man Jesus, is God’s only “*free creation*” so to speak for only He is its cause, content and purpose! *Chance, fortuitousness and stages of evolution* not only contrast God’s goodness and glorification, it **opposes** its *end and goal* – which is a *free creation* of glory – in the face of Jesus Christ and **nowhere** else.

Finally, *chance, fortuitousness and stages of evolution* are the very contradiction of **God Himself** who created with a purpose and plan and who controls his creation to every detail that He created it in – all with the divine Eye on Jesus the Christ. “*In the theological concept*” of both creation and the Creator there is nothing rational or Scriptural in the need for *chance, fortuitousness and stages of evolution* – it is “*pure*” and utter **contradiction**. (Just like it is *pure* and utter **contradiction in the concepts** of geo-ology, dzoh-ology and cosmo-ology.)

*Intentional creation of God, for the purpose of the self-communication of his goodness, with his glorification as its end and goal, is only possible in Jesus Christ, “God-with-us”. It is not possible through*

“*evolutionary process*”. And our knowledge of it is **not** through ‘*evolutionary theory*’. *In the theological concept of God’s creation* and of its salvation, there is no *chance* and no *purposefulness of stages of evolution*. Both *are contradictions* simply of *creation* and salvation – no mere *contrasts*.

The Sabbath is at all possible in the setting of a “*chance*”-less creation without “*evolutionary process*” – “*according to the texts of the creation narrative*”. There it is written that every act of God, in both the creation of the heavens and the earth and all that in them is, and of the Seventh Day, was **of the volition of the I-Am**, Yahweh, the Mighty One. Yes, the Sabbath is neither the logical nor the evolutionary outflow of creation. Nothing in creation *per se* could suggest another day would follow the sixth on which creation was finished with the creation of man, its zenith – not the furthest possibility of *chance* or *fortuitousness!* The Seventh Day “*purely*” occurs the act of God’s creating Will and Word according to the eternal divine Will and Design. “*Purely*” this fact of the Sabbath’s origin and nature is the reason of its perpetuity, of its *continued creation*. Yes, each week the Sabbath is *the New Creation* of God’s *continued creation*.

In fact, does one believe the rest of God’s Sabbath Day, then one believes the best reason to believe in sudden creation. It is exactly this inference that forces Moltmann elsewhere to argue of the concepts **peaceful** adaptation or **violent** survival of the fittest, the **peaceful** as the *more successful* cause of evolution. Yet even ‘informed’, ‘liberal’ or ‘enlightened’ Judaism, while also keeping fast to the Sabbath, believes in evolution or *chance, fortuitousness and stages of evolution* as the cause of both the ‘*first*’ and the “*continuous creation*”. The Sabbath Day, **only because of its eschatological and Christological promise of content**, makes the difference and is the reason why one should believe sudden creation rather than *chance, fortuitousness and stages of evolution*. The Sabbath only makes the difference because of **its own dependence** on Christ. A Sabbath *purely* of *creation*, won’t make this difference because a Sabbath *purely* of *creation* completely is nonsensical.

Moltmann sees creation as “*open systems*” of “*free creations*”, “*without any preconditions or presuppositions*”. Simply, Moltmann – like evolution generally – sees creation as a freak accident which God could not have planned or willed. For is it possible that God could as much as have willed creation, if “*the initial contingency of being itself*”, “*exists generally*”? It is as good as to presuppose an eternally and self-existent creation. For, asserts Moltmann, “*creation is evidently without any preconditions or presuppositions*” – *creation is* even without the *precondition or presupposition* that it is **created** creation. God had no prior *conditions* for creation’s existence and life; He *supposed* no glory

for creation or through creation for Himself in creating creation – so what would God have created creation for? Creation must have been self-existent and without need of God to create or to *continue* it. It must have been the creation of chaos and death and darkness! Creation must have been the negation of God and an insult to a Creator.

But then come “*the texts of the creation narrative*” with a history of *Continued Creation* right within the history of The Creation – the history of God’s creating the Sabbath Day! A Sabbath Day – like “*creation as a whole*” – solely *preconditioned and presupposed* for God’s own glory and worship is a *contingency*. Through being created, it in principle, is to be expected, and must follow, if one understand and believe it in **Christian** sense. But in the setting of *open systems of evolution and chance* a Sabbath Day solely *preconditioned and presupposed* for God’s own glory and worship seems ridiculous. The Sabbath is the direct antithesis of “*chance*” or “*stages of evolution*” – it is its very “*contradiction*” and “*contrast*”.

“Creation in the beginning is simultaneously the creation of time. Because time is only manifested in change, and because it is only in change that it can be perceived, the initial creation has to be understood as *creatio mutabilis*.”

The Sabbath, being time that “*in the beginning*” was created, according to Moltmann is “*creatio mutabilis*” – it is changeable. Eschatologically that means in *the New Creation* the Sabbath *can only be perceived in change* – change into what? Into the Sun’s Day?

Moltmann first arbitrarily chooses one consequence of existence or being and from it arbitrarily decides on certain conclusions for final. “*Creation in the beginning is simultaneously the creation of time*”, true. But time is **not** “*only manifested in change*”, and *can be perceived* in things besides *change*. Time is perceivable in relativity – **constant** relativity it must be or one cannot speak of time. And first of all time is perceived in the relativity between life (perception) and not ‘living’ things (or non-perception). But primarily time is real and sensible within the relation between saved life and unsaved living. The saved only truly will know what time in eternal life means; the damned what time in eternal absence of life means. Therefore, yes, “*time can only be perceived in change*” – the change in life brought about and preconditioned by Christian Faith. One cannot properly speak of time merely as creation.

Time is deduced from **movement** – movement between relative and relatively constant objects. That does not necessarily imply “*change*” or *perception in change*. One cannot deduce from the reality of time the reality of fickleness, *mutability* or mortality – which *perceptions* are *change*. On the contrary, the **Bible-perception** is that exactly stableness, life and immortality **within time**, are of the essence of God’s creation.

Were it not for the inexplicable and incongruous entrance into God’s sinless creation of **sin** – and consequently the congruity of the antithesis of time, namely, **death** – *change* in the sense Moltmann uses the concept, would not have been possible. In a sinless, ‘pristine’ and stable creation time would still have existed, “for **in six days** God created the heavens and the earth” – sinless and perfect. Only in death is there no time. There is no time in death because *only* within **existence and life** – *only* within the **life** of God’s **created** things, is time *perceivable*.

The **Sabbath** is only perceivable in the life and existence of God’s created things – but **redeemed and saved** created things.

God’s “*continued creation*” is not *chance*; and it is not *evolution* or *stages of evolution*. Like the first creation the *continued creation* is **God’s** and all that that implies. The Sabbath Day belongs to both God’s first creation and his *continued creation*. It “remains” God’s *continued creation* “for the People of God”. As such, *evidently*, must it be *creation*; shall it be *creation* today – shall its *purpose, condition and supposition* be established in the creation and be confirmed in the history of *continued creation* – **the history of life and salvation**. Yea, *evidently* shall the Sabbath as *continued creation* “remain” – because, *evidently*, even its original creation receives its establishment and confirmation from and by **the history of the Son of Man**.

But the Sabbath, contrary to what it is for Moltmann, must be cognitively observed as **God’s** creation and as God’s *continued creation*. It is not possible to perceive of the Sabbath in any other way. This cognisance of the Sabbath as this **constant** factor within time and space, implies its **eschatological** nature – its sign-ificance or worth of being sign. The Sabbath itself receives its fullness not in itself, but in that which it signifies and prophetically *anticipates*, which is *The New Creation*. It is impossible to treat the Sabbath as **creation fulfilled in itself** – which is exactly what Moltmann makes of it. Says he, “According to the creation narrative in the Priestly Writing, the creation of the world ended on the sixth day: ‘And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good’. (Gen.1:31) And yet: ‘On the seventh day God finished his work which he had done’. (Gen.2:2) What did he add to his ‘very good’ creation on the sabbath? What did the finished creation still lack? In what does the completion of creation consist? It consists in **God’s rest**. It is a completion through rest. Out of God’s rest spring the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day. The work of creation is completed through the Creator’s rest, his creative activity is completed through his sanctification of the sabbath. Exodus 31.17 adds after God’s rest that ‘he drew a breath of relief’. That is a very strange way of ‘completing’ a work.” (p. 278, Chapter 11, 1, *The Completion of Creation*)

*“What did God add to ... creation on the sabbath? What did the finished creation still lack?” “The work of **creation** is completed”, “his (God’s) **creative activity** is completed”. **That**, for Moltmann, is the meaning of God’s **rest**. According to Moltmann and Sabbatharians generally, **nothing**, but God’s **creation**-activity of rest which means **only more “creation”**, was added to his creation.*

Moltmann may perhaps have seen Jesus Christ in “*God’s rest*”, Jesus Christ in God’s “*sanctification of the seventh day*”, Jesus Christ in God’s “*blessing*”, Jesus Christ in God’s “*completion*”. But no, these things find their “*completion*” “*in what the completion of creation consists*” **in** – in no more – least of all in Jesus Christ. Because *what the completion of **creation** consists in*, is what the *completion of “God’s rest” consists in* – it is **not Jesus Christ** who is the *completion of “God’s rest”*! For Moltmann and Sabbatharians generally God’s Rest and God’s completion in Jesus Christ is **another** completion – not the completion of “*only creation*”. *God’s Rest*, which He in Jesus Christ reserved for the Seventh Day by Word of Oath in resurrection from the dead and in an Entering of His Own into Rest, Moltmann and the whole Church reserve for the **First** Day of the week! That is why the Sabbath cannot be the completion of anything more than *creation*; cannot be the *completion* of anything eschatological, prophetic, or “*Messianic*”!

Yes, the crumbs be enough and glory for the dogs. Yet the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in **God’s Rest** in the Seventh Day, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in God’s **sanctifying** the Seventh Day, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in His **blessing** on the Seventh Day, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in His **Finishing** of the Seventh Day, may not “shine upon” it! And now I see why the First Day is not given a night before it – so that the Sabbath’s glory and light must *reach beyond the day* so as to reach the First Day and it, will receive all the light that should have shined “in Sabbath’s time”.

*“Let us first of all understand the metaphors used. What is called ‘God’s rest’ is a rest ‘from all his work which he had done’. (Gen..2:3) The Creator stands aside from his creative activity and confronts his works. In doing this he also comes to himself again, as it were, and is wholly concentrated in himself, after he had gone out of himself in his creative activity and was wholly with his creation. In his creative activity he was free for his works, which are in accordance with himself; in his sabbath rest he becomes free from his works again, and returns to himself. Is this a return to the eternal being before the creation of the world and human beings? It is certainly a cessation from creating, and hence a quiescence in himself; but it is not a return to the world-less, eternal glory which precedes creation and out of which God creatively*

*acts. The God who rests on the sabbath is the Creator who rests from his creation. After creation he comes to himself again – only not without his creation but with it. So his rest becomes at the same time the rest of his creation; and his good pleasure in his creation becomes the joy of created things themselves.”*

Again it must be asked, how but in Jesus Christ? How but with the view to Jesus Christ and how but as by the truth of Jesus Christ?

*“Let us first of all understand the metaphors used.”*

*“What is called ‘God’s rest’ is a rest ‘from all his work which he had done’.”* Correct, but it is an over simplification. It “*certainly*” is **not**, “*a cessation from creating*”. I don’t see it in the text. ‘*God’s rest*’ verily was to create. Literally:– “**Thus were finished** the heavens and the earth and all the host of them;”<sup>2:1</sup> **thus ended** God on the Seventh Day his works which He had made; **thus rested** He in the Seventh Day from all his work which He had made.<sup>2:2</sup> **Thus blessed** God the Seventh Day and **sanctified** it because that in **its being created**, He rested from all his work which He had made (the Seventh Day).<sup>2:3</sup> **Thus in the day of their beginnings** the heavens and the earth were **created (... God thus resting)**”.<sup>2:4</sup>

*Bara* – to create, is more than *asah* – to make; *Bara* is **by creating to finish** what has been “made”. On the Sixth day God saw what He had “made”; on the Seventh day He **finished** its being created and **fulfilled** its “beginnings”.

‘*God’s rest*’ was **in creating to finish** creation. ‘*God’s rest*’ in no manner could be separated from his creation on the Sabbath, nor his creation from Him. On the contrary, ‘*God’s rest*’ was a drawing near of God to his creation and a bringing near to Him of his creation. ‘*God’s rest*’ was the *adding* to creation of what it *lacked*. ‘*God’s rest*’ implies man’s **unrest**, and that God on the Sabbath Day gave man the peace which he forfeited, and at-one-ment and reconciliation with God. ‘*God’s rest*’ meant God on the Sabbath Day approached man in love and gave him peace and space through Jesus Christ.

“On **the Seventh** Day ... God ...”! It is **the only day** it is said of. It is the only day it is said of, of **God**, that He, “**on the Seventh Day**”, **as** that day, and “**in**” that day, acted, “**thus**”! God the Seventh Day acted “**thus**” – four times! “*Thus*”: the same Hebrew (*wih*) translated “*and*” – which is not so good. “*Thus*” – “*for the reason*” – that in **resting**, God acted. God “on the Seventh Day” is **Subject**, as well as the **Object** of His own, His one and his **whole** creating **deed, that was his rest, also**. God’s Sabbath Rest “on the Seventh Day” was God’s act of *New Creation*. *The New Creation* was since God’s “finishing” “in the beginning”! It was “**from**” God “from all his works which He had made”, “rested”. It originated there and from there, persisted. Its fountain head was Christ! In



**creating anew**, and, in *the New Creation*, “God thus the Seventh Day rested”.

But it must be impossible to see the Sabbath sees Christ?! Sabbatharians like Sundaydarians refuse. What worthless piece of information both make of this Scripture.

No! The *metaphor* of ‘*God’s rest*’ of the Seventh Day *anticipates* the believers’ **Rest in Christ**. It is prophetic; it is eschatological – pregnant with *Messianic meaning* – or it *ganz und gar und restlos* has nothing to do with *Christianity*, should not be heard in Christian conversation and not be given a thought – should not fill one line of Christian theology.

Moltmann’s picture – with no Jesus Christ in it – of God who after having revealed Himself in creating, in “*cessation from creating*”, retracts into Himself and “*comes to himself again*”, is like Graham Hancock’s alien creators who pay planet earth a visit in their flying saucers, step out, wave their magic wand, step back and fly off again.

Neither the creation nor the Sabbath is “*continuous creation*” as if they could get along without God or his **Presence**. Both “*the creation*” and the Sabbath Day are God’s **sudden**, and, **continued** creation – both live by virtue of God-Being-With-Us. Without God’s revelation, no creation! Without Jesus Christ, no continuance! Without Jesus Christ, no creation! Without Him, Jesus Christ, no Sabbath Day! No Sabbath Day therefore that is not the Christian Sabbath Day!

Both “*the creation*” and the Sabbath Day are the object of God’s special love and care – which is their being created anew every moment. Without Him, Jesus Christ, no creation this very moment, no Sabbath Day this very moment!

But the Sabbath is more than God’s continued creation in this sense, because it at first was created and ever since was continued by **the ultimate** of the bestowal of God’s favour and preference of **Presence**. The Sabbath would not have come into being and would not have lasted one day were it not that in it and through it God meant business with man **through Jesus Christ** which business was his salvation and atonement eternally – **even the exceeding greatness of the power of God in action to us-ward in raising Christ from the dead**. Ephesians 1:18-23 is “A Psalm for the Sabbath” if ever there was because it illustrates ‘*God’s rest*’ of Genesis 2:1-4 for what it really is.

What is wrong with the Sabbath as seen by Moltmann? What does Moltmann’s theology of the Sabbath lack? Is it permissible to call Moltmann’s ideas on the Sabbath a theology of the Sabbath? If his isn’t a theology – a worked out scheme about the Sabbath – then what could be? He in fact talks about a theology of the Sabbath. What does Moltmann’s theology of the Sabbath lack? **It lacks Christ**. Creation must satisfy

creation. Like the rich young man Moltmann’s Sabbath confronts Christ but would not allow Him to be the Lord of its life. It would not leave all riches of creation for worthless, and follow Jesus. Moltmann’s Sabbath may have conquered all the worlds, but has lost its soul. It promised the eschatological inheritance of ‘*God’s rest*’, but disappointed and became beggarly. When it should have laid claim on Christ’s accomplishment of God’s sure Word of Prophecy, it despised it.

For example, how is it possible in the following lines, not to read Jesus Christ? “*The God who rests on the Sabbath is the Creator who rests from his creation. After creation He comes to himself again – only not without his creation but with it. So his rest becomes at the same time the rest of his creation; and this good pleasure in his creation becomes the joy of created things themselves.*” (p. 279)

We are not allowed to read the ‘fullness of Godliness’ into this. We are not allowed to say, *The God who rests on the Sabbath is the Creator who rests* in the **salvation** of his creation. God only rests after having **redeemed** his creation. He is *the God who comes to himself again, only not without his creation but with it – in Jesus Christ!* Jesus Christ **rose from the dead** bodily and was seated at the right hand of God as this Man *not without his creation but with it*. In and through Jesus Christ in and through resurrection from the dead is God’s creation “*come to God again*” – **atoned and justified and glorified**. Jesus Christ brings God’s creation “*with*” God – reconciled and at peace with its Creator. Through Jesus Christ *only, God’s rest becomes at the same time the rest of his creation; and this God’s good pleasure in the Son in Whom He is well pleased, becomes God’s good pleasure in his creation*. Jesus Christ has become *the joy of created things themselves*.

That is the meaning of God’s rest of his Sabbath – nothing less; if anything less it is worth nothing and is as lost as the tables of stone it was written on once upon a time. Incidentally, the very myth about the two Tables the Law was written on, that they were transported into heaven, betrays the Law and the Sabbath as Law’s want of glory. But no, this myth isn’t true. Or it must signify the Law’s magnification prophesied of in Jesus Christ, “He will magnify the Law, and make it honourable ... the Lord is well pleased for his Righteousness’ sake!” (Is.42:21) “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me!” (Ps.40:7) And nobody can say this isn’t written of **Christ**, or that it is allegorical abuse of Scripture, for it is also written of Christ, “Wherefor, when He cometh into the world (in resurrection from the dead!) He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not ... in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast no pleasure ... but a body hast Thou prepared Me (for sacrifice and in resurrection). Then said I, Lo, **I come** – in the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do **thy will**, O God! ... He taketh away

the first (sacrifices He would no longer have neither has pleasure in any more) that He may establish the second Sacrifice by the which will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hb.10:5-10) Christ took the Law and all creation into heaven and seated it at the right hand of Almighty God **in Himself!** Jesus Christ, *“not without his creation but with it”*, **ascended God’s Throne**. The Sabbath receives its meaning in Christ or no longer and not at all has meaning or function or worth or service.

Moltmann does not see it that way. He sees the meaning, worth and service of the Sabbath as *“of created things”*, *“in themselves”*.

If not *“in themselves”* the Sabbath and *“created things”* are God’s *good pleasure* and if not *“in themselves”* they have *become his joy*, then *only* as the Sabbath and the *“created things”* of the New Covenant and of *the New Creation* – then *only in Jesus Christ* – can they have *become God’s good pleasure* and joy!

What Moltmann says, is true, **but only in part**, where he says in the next paragraph, *“God rests ‘from his works’ on the sabbath, but in doing so he at the same time rests in face of his works”*, because *God* also *on the sabbath, rests in his works*. God is satisfied in his works – Why? Because He *faces* them in the face of the glory of Jesus! It is said four times in Gn.2:1-4 that God rested “from his works”, so one should presuppose it for literally true. God did not face his works directly. On the Sabbath, that is, in the day of his rest, God in Mercy, **as were it a second time**, looks on a creation that through Adam and sin, had fallen from grace. Gods sees his creation and finds joy in it **despite – because He sees it in the Son in Whom He is well pleased**.

That, is *‘God’s rest’* of the first and creation-Sabbath. That, Moltmann not in a life’s time will or can admit. And if he would it would be to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ or not at all, for, says he, *“... When God permitted creation, this was the divine self-humiliation which reached its profoundest point in the cross of Christ. ... The space which comes into being and is set free by God’s self-limitation is a literally God-forsaken space ... and it is against the threat of this that he maintains his creation in life. ... Nothingness contradicts, not merely creation but God too, since he is creation’s Creator. God’s creative activity outwards is preceded by this humble divine self-restriction. In this sense God’s self-humiliation does not merely begin with creation, inasmuch as God commits himself to this world: it begins beforehand, and is the pre-supposition that makes creation possible. God’s creative love is grounded in his humble, self-humiliating love. This self-restricting love is the beginning of that self-emptying of God which Philippians 2 sees as the divine mystery of the Messiah. Even in order to create heaven and earth, God emptied himself of his all-plenishing omnipotence, and as*

*Creator took upon himself the form of a servant.”* At last, *“The initial self-limitation of God’s which makes creation possible assumes the glorifying, de-restricted boundlessness in which the whole creation is transfigured ...”*. (p. 87 to 89, Chapter 4, *God the Creator*, par. 3, *Creation Out of Nothing*)

*“The Creator is not an ‘unmoved mover’ of the universe. On the contrary, creation is preceded by this self-movement on God’s part, a movement which allows creation the space for its own being.”* The only problem is that for Moltmann, all this is *“the final form which creation is to find in God”*. Creation fulfils creation’s fulfilment. For Moltmann the *“de-restricted boundlessness in which the whole creation is transfigured”* does follow creation in terms of time, but only precedes it in terms of principle. *“The final form which creation is to find in God”* actually had occurred in creation itself. Moltmann neither sees God’s *self-humiliation* nor his *de-restriction* into the *boundless transfiguration*, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What had been hidden in the being of God and within his self-movement afterwards found expression in His act of creation. It *“is the pre-supposition that makes creation possible”* – not salvation. A **Mediator** between man and God, between creation and God, isn’t mandatory or indispensable for creation to *assume its glorifying, de-restricted boundlessness*. Where he says, *“Let us take up the idea at this point (of the divine self-humiliation which reached its profoundest point in the cross of Christ) and think it through further”*, Moltmann concludes, *“This points to a necessary correction in the interpretation of creation”*. His conclusion amounts to conceding to evolutionary processes of *creation* – not supernatural redemption. *“God does not create merely by calling something into existence, or by setting something afoot. In a more profound sense he ‘creates’ by letting-be, by making room, and by withdrawing himself. The creative making is expressed in masculine metaphors. But the creative letting-be is better brought out through motherly categories.”* God’s *“withdrawing himself”* explains creation – not redemption.

God’s *“self-restricting love”* which *“is the beginning of that self-emptying of God which Philippians 2 sees as the divine mystery of the Messiah”*, Moltmann purely understands as *“in order to create heaven and earth”*. Thus Moltmann transforms even the historic Jesus into *“God’s evolutive immanence”*! *“God emptied himself of his all-plenishing omnipotence, and as Creator took upon himself the form of a servant.”* He sees it as an ‘event’ or movement within God Himself that belonged with the *“Nihil”* of **before** actual creation. (Point 1 under par. 3, p. 87/88) Moltmann does not interpret *Philippians 2* or the incarnation of the Word in the light of **the historic Jesus as the simultaneous or co-event of creation**. Instead God’s *immanence* that at its *profoundest point* is

observable in the *Cross*, actively and observable is the “*continuous creation*”, the “*letting-be*” discoverable in and as “*evolutionary processes*”, “*chance*” and “*fortuitousness*”. Thus Moltmann fits redemption and salvation through God’s *self-humiliation* into his scheme of “*an ecological doctrine of creation*”. One might have thought that through God’s *self-humiliation*, the salvation of His creation – the Promise of its Final Form and New Creation through and in Jesus Christ – must have entered into God’s idea and activity of the Seventh Day of creation week. But no! Moltmann envisages the consummation of **creation** – that eventually it must and will redeem and save **itself** – God’s *evolutive immanence, making it possible*. God’s grace consists in allowing creation the *space* for redeeming and saving itself through *processes* of restoration, rehabilitation and general goodwill – *peaceful processes* – among *human beings* to that *end and goal*.

The Sabbath for Moltmann is indispensable for the obtaining of this *gaol and aim*. It serves creation. The Sabbath never had been abrogated because it still must help fulfil this purpose. But for Moltmann the Sabbath Day hasn’t got anything to do with “*Christian Faith*” because it isn’t “*Resurrection Faith*”! This consistently is clear in Moltmann’s theology already since his *Theologie der Hoffnung*. He diverges not an inch from his maxim that “*Christian Faith that isn’t Resurrection Faith is neither Christian nor Faith*”. Because Moltmann doesn’t see the Sabbath should be and actually was **the day of God’s creation for and of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead**, he is compelled to restrict his explanation of its meaning and pre-eminence to concepts of creation. That also supplies the reason why Moltmann has so little to say on behalf of the First Day. He isn’t able to say much for the First Day of the week because it never was and never will be possible to say something true about it for being the Christian Feast of the Resurrection. The First Day of the week never would, never could, never should have been and consequently never was the day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Moltmann should first have had a look at the chronology of events in their eschatological bearings and meanings in both historic events of creation and New Creation, and he should have noticed that the Seventh Day Sabbath Day – and not the First Day of the week – eschatologically was to be and historically in fact proved to be **the day of God’s creation for and of Jesus’ resurrection**.

God’s revelation of his love has been shown and proven. “*The divine mystery of the Messiah*” already is history and no longer promise and prophecy still pending fulfilment. “*The divine mystery of the Messiah*” still is Promise and Prophecy – but resolved and fulfilled Promise and Prophecy. *God as Creator emptied himself and took upon himself the form of a servant – assumed his self-humiliation – not merely*

before and when He created, *inasmuch as he committed himself to this world in Jesus Christ!* God’s *self-humiliation does not merely begin “beforehand”, is not merely “the pre-supposition that makes creation possible”*.

Historically and actually God’s *self-humiliation* has proven itself for what it really and truly is: **God in Christ to us-ward**. It didn’t only happen hidden in the will and being of God before creation and Incarnation. The *Creator’s emptying of Himself* has historically and actually proved itself to be God in Christ to us-ward in His very accomplishment of both creation and redemption. God in Christ to us-ward **IS** “*the pre-supposition that makes creation possible*” – that originally made it possible and **every moment since is making** it possible. *God’s creative activity outwards, now, is preceded by this glorious divine self-revelation in eternal co-existence of New Creation and Creator-Redeemer – even Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead*. This, God’s glorious divine self-revelation in eternal co-existence of New Creation and Creator-Redeemer in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead, is *God’s self-humiliation* that began *creation, the pre-supposition that made it possible* – and is the living reality that upholds the possibility of all its being – the possibility of all existence and life.

This – that it is Jesus Christ who is *God’s self-humiliation* – is what Moltmann would not allow, for it must imply Christ’s Presence on and in the creation-Sabbath Day. Where Moltmann time and again reaches some dangerously pantheistic conclusions, (so much so that he each time has to explain why his conclusions are not pantheistic, like here on p. 89) he would have done otherwise had he allowed Christ to fulfil ‘*the mystery of godliness*’ hidden and revealed in the Sabbath Day.

If the “*mystery of the sabbath*” be the ‘*the mystery of godliness*’ “*manifested in (the) Being*” of Jesus Christ, He it shall be that which makes possible the Sabbath Day! To conclude – the Sabbath Day shall be Day on which Jesus rose from the dead. It is possible beforehand; from the nature of the case; by contingency! Christ’s Presence in the Sabbath Day is what would make **impossible** the present Day of Worship-Rest of the Christian Faith, namely the First Day of the week. Moltmann could not let it happen. He restricts the Sabbath’s meaning to that of creation. The Sabbath Day doesn’t depend on its chronological resources of authenticity. (My bracketed reference at the beginning of this section.) These resources lie ready at hand, but the Sabbath has no need to call on them. (Only we men in dispute are forced to refer to them.) From its cosmic eschatological significance and magnitude – from its created essentiality – the Sabbath derives its potentials. Its humbleness is its glory – to be servant to the Servant of the Lord. In the day of its Lord’s summons, the Sabbath stands ready. “On the Seventh Day God finished”

= “in Sabbath’s time” ... “God raised Christ from the dead”.

#### 7.7.1.12.

#### “The Sabbath: The Feast of Creation”

#### Chapter 11. p. 276

With just this heading in mind, one asks, What does one keep a feast for? To remember the beginning of an event, or its outcome?

“The goal and completion of every Jewish and every Christian doctrine must be the doctrine of the sabbath; for on the sabbath and through the sabbath God ‘completed’ his creation, and on the sabbath and through it, men and women perceive as God’s creation the reality in which they live and which they themselves are. The sabbath opens creation for its future. On the sabbath the redemption of the world is celebrated in anticipation. The sabbath is itself the presence of eternity in time, and a foretaste of the world to come. The observance of the sabbath became the identifying mark of Jews in exile; and in the same way, the doctrine of the sabbath of creation becomes the identifying mark of the biblical doctrine of creation, distinguishing it from the interpretation of the world as nature. It is the sabbath which manifests the world’s identity as creation, sanctifies it and blesses it.”

The first thing that strikes one of this observation of Moltmann’s is its obvious contradictory statements.

The sabbath opens creation for its future – on the sabbath and through the sabbath God ‘completed’ his creation;

On the sabbath the redemption of the world is celebrated in anticipation – on the sabbath and through it, men and women perceive as God’s creation the reality in which they live and which they themselves are;

The sabbath is itself the presence of eternity in time – It is the sabbath which manifests the world’s identity as creation.

The second thing that strikes one of this observation of Moltmann’s is its attributing to the Sabbath several exclusive attributes of God.

“The goal and completion of every ... Christian doctrine must be the doctrine of the sabbath”;

“Through the sabbath God ‘completed’ his creation”;

“It is the sabbath which ... sanctifies (creation), and blesses it.”

It becomes clear from this and similar passages why Richard Bauckham could say, “Many critics, ... find Moltmann’s work lacking in philosophical analysis and logical rigor.” Although he recognises that “Moltmann’s way of doing theology has other merits, such as breadth of

vision, which more analytical treatments lack”, it nevertheless “is true that it sometimes obscures conceptual problems in his work which could otherwise come to light and be overcome more quickly”. Bauckham continues, “...Two related tendencies in some of his later work call for criticism. In the first place, elements of undisciplined speculation appear, and secondly, whereas his earlier work was carefully rooted in current biblical scholarship, his use of biblical material in the later work seems rather often to ignore historical-critical interpretation and to leave hermeneutical principles dangerously unclear.” (The Modern Theologians, Blackwell, 2001, p. 223.)

I find especially the last point applicable when it comes to Moltmann’s “theology of the sabbath”.

In our present passage Moltmann refers to Jonathan Edwards, “The End for which God Created the World”, Works, Vol. 1, Edinburgh 1974, pp. 92 to 121. (Try from p. 94 on.) Starts Edwards this treatise, “To avoid all confusion in our inquiries concerning the end for which God created the world, a distinction should be observed between the chief end for which an agent performs any work, and the ultimate end. These two phrases are not always precisely of the same signification: and though the chief end be always an ultimate end, yet every ultimate end is not always a chief end. A chief end is opposite to an inferior end: an ultimate end is opposite to a subordinate end. A subordinate end is what an agent aims at, not at all upon its own account, but wholly on the account of a further end, of which it is considered as a means. Thus when a man goes a journey to obtain a medicine to restore his health, the obtaining of that medicine is the subordinate end; because it is not an end that he values at all upon its own account, but wholly as a means of a further end, viz., his health. Separate the medicine from that further end, and it is not at all desired.”

Where is Christ placed? And where creation? Is Christ the Chief End for which God created the world? Or is the world it? Of course it is not the world! Separate the world from Christ, and it is not at all desired; separate creation from Christ, and it is not valued at all upon its own account. Therefore as well, Separate the Sabbath from Christ, and it is opposite to the chief end and inferior to “the goal and completion” “for which God created the world”.

One asks, What does one keep the Sabbath for? To remember the **beginning** of an event? To remember the subordinate and inferior end of it, “creation, in itself”? Or to remember its **outcome** – its chief and ultimate end of which the Sabbath is “considered as a means”? As creation’s, so is the Sabbath’s chief and ultimate end **the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.** One, as a Christian, keeps a feast – one, as a Christian, keeps the Sabbath Day – for to remember the outcome of the

event of creation, as well as its cause. Christian Faith appreciates the Sabbath on the account of its **further end**, which is Jesus Christ and His chief and own ultimate end, **even His Resurrection from the dead!** The feast (and the remembering and observance of it) is but a *means* and an inferior **servant**. **For this reason:** That the Chief End for which God Created the World verily is the Chief End for which God Created the Sabbath Day as well. It is that End of which the obtaining of the Sabbath Day is the subordinate end; because the Sabbath Day is not an end that God values at all upon its own account, but wholly as a means of His further end, viz., “Himself”, and, his own “glory” – the “**One End**” as Edwards calls it. The “**One End**” of the Sabbath Day as of the whole creation, is God in Jesus Christ.

Edwards concludes on p. 102, “... *all things are from God, as their first cause and fountain; so all things tend to Him, and in their progress come nearer and nearer to Him through all eternity: which argues, that He who is their first cause is their last end.*” If this may not be said of the Sabbath Day also, then neither could God have been the Sabbath Day’s *first cause and fountain*, nor its *last end*. Then can the Sabbath Day not *tend to Him* or *progress nearer* to God. For what then, should the Christian still regard the Sabbath Day if it cannot serve this purpose and this and no other purpose? But if, from its very beginning, and throughout its whole history, the Sabbath Day had “*as first cause and fountain ... and last end ... God*”, if, from its very beginning, and throughout its whole history, the Sabbath Day “*tend(ed) to Him*” and “*progressed nearer to Him*”, then, should not the Christian still “**keep**” the Sabbath Day, “**holy to this end?**” The answer is indeed given in the Law in so many words: “Therefore, **God** ...”! But, which is the more serious question – for is not Jesus Christ, and His glory, **God’s Chief End?** Then, should not the Christian still regard the Sabbath Day **for the sake of Jesus Christ** and for the sake of his resurrection from the dead? Had the Christian not Jesus Christ – in resurrection from the dead – had he no reason for to keep the Sabbath Day.

In the treatise referred to Edwards mentions the Sabbath twice. “*Places of Scripture that lead us to suppose, that God created the world for his Name, to make his perfection known; and that he made it for his praise. (Ex.7:5)*” God meant the Sabbath “*to be a great end of the work of redemption by Jesus Christ*” with reference to texts like Ro.3:25-26, Eph.2:4-7. And if it is possible to sum up these several pages in one word, it is the “*Glory*” of God and of God “*Himself*” being “*the goal and completion of the sabbath*”. (Sect. 4, p. 112a)

Then says Edwards on p. 113a, “*There are several Scriptures which would lead us to suppose this (the glory of God) to be the great thing that God sought of the moral world, and the end aimed at in moral*

*agents, wherein they are to be active in answering their aim. ... This People have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise*”. (1 Pt.2:9) “*This is spoken of as a great end of the miracles which God wrought ... “Verily my Sabbaths shall ye keep: for it a sign between me and you ... that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you”.* “*This was a great end of the redemption out of Egypt ...*” – and so it leads up to Edwards’ application of it all to Christ on p. 113b, “*And it is pronounced to be the end of that great, actual salvation, which should follow Christ’s purchase of salvation.*” Says Edwards with reference to the redemption supposed in Ex.7:5, the goal of creation, is “*to be a great end of the work of redemption by Jesus Christ*”.

It reminds me of Augustine’s contemplation (I cannot remember now the place or the exact words, but the idea I’m sure of), where he prays something like this, You o God, created us unto yourself; and our hearts remain restless until brought into your rest. God Himself is the goal and completion of the Sabbath and our hearts find their rest in God’s.

Edwards quotes Eph.2:4-7 and 3: 8, 9,10, “*To preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see, what is the fellowship of that mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things in Jesus Christ. To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.*” Edwards in fact concludes that “*The expression, “according to the riches of his glory”, (Eph 3:16), is apparently equivalent to that in the same Epistle, chap. 1:7, according to the riches of his grace”, and chap.2:7, “the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus.” In like manner is the word glory used in Phil. 4:19, “But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.” And Rom. 9:23, “And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of his mercy.”*”

The chief end and goal of creation – as of the Sabbath Day – is the Glory of God in His Mercy, in other words, is “the glory of God in the **face of Jesus Christ**”.

Moltmann greatly stresses this perspective on the *Imago Dei* (Chapter 9, p. 221), with reference to 2Cor. 4:6. Says he, “*“The face of God’ is a commonly used symbol for God’s turning to men and women in kindness, for his attentive mindfulness and his purposefully directed presence.”* See also Edwards, p. 117a, “*(Jesus Christ) who is the brightness of His glory, Hb.1:3.*”

“**The chief end**”, “**for which God created the world**”, is the Glory of God, but— “**in the face of Jesus Christ!**”

Edwards also places the Sabbath in the context where he refers to “Christ being set at God’s right hand, made King of angels and men; set at the head of the universe, having all power given Him in heaven and earth, to that end that he may promote their happiness; being made Head over all things to the Church, and having the government of the whole creation for their good. Christ mentions it, Mark 2:28, as the reason why the Son of Man is made LORD of the Sabbath, because the Sabbath was made for man. And if so, we might in like manner argue, that all things were made for man, **because the Son of Man is made LORD of all things.**” (p. 115a) (Emphasis CGE) “Christ mentions ... Mark 2:28”, “the reason why” *He*, “the Son of Man”, “is made LORD of all things”; *He is* “made Head over all things to the Church”. *It shows the Glory of Christ, and Christ shows the glory of God the chief and superior and ultimate end and goal and aim of all creation – and therefor of the Sabbath in the final analysis because it was the Seventh and last Day of God’s creative decision and act and the only Day in itself being the direct object of God’s creative decision and act. That should be the goal and completion of every Christian doctrine of the sabbath. In the language of the Church, God made the Sabbath for the worship of Him through Jesus Christ.*

*Every Christian doctrine of the Sabbath that still is Jewish, is neither Christian doctrine nor the Christian Sabbath.*

Says Moltmann, “The Reformed doctrine of decrees never had only creation in the beginning in mind; it always simultaneously had in view **the eternal kingdom of glory**, for whose sake God created heaven and earth.” (p. 81) “Since it is through Christ that the new, true creation begins, **Christ must already be the mystery of the creation in the beginning.** The earlier is understood in the later, and the beginning is comprehended in the light of the consummation.” (p. 226)

It could not be perceived more truly. Why then does Moltmann find it impossible to apply the same principle to his doctrine of the Sabbath? Because he reserves the principle of these conclusions for the First Day of the week – because he understands that it, and not the Sabbath, is the day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead.

*The Sabbath has no right of existence in serving the glory of creation. Its end is subordinate to what its Creator aims at, not at all upon its own account, but wholly on the account of that further end, of which it is considered as a means. Thus when a man observes the Sabbath Day his observing of it is the subordinate and inferior end; because his is not an end that God values at all upon its own account, but wholly as a means of God’s further end, viz., his own glory. Separate man’s keeping of the Sabbath from that further end which is the worship and the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and it is not at all desired.*

*Also is it true of the Sabbath itself – it is from God. So it tends to God, and in its progress comes nearer and nearer to Him through all eternity: which argues, that **He who is its first cause is its last end.** *The Sabbath is a subordinate end. God bestows worth upon it, not at all upon its own account, but wholly on the account of a further end. The Sabbath is considered as a means to God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Thus when God goes a journey beyond all His works He had made to obtain a Seventh Day beyond, the obtaining of that Day is the subordinate end to His further, greater end, viz., the Rest of His Glory which He finds in and founds upon the Son in Whom He is well pleased. Separate the Sabbath Day from that further end, and it is not at all desired.**

It was Moltmann’s decision to make reference to Jonathan Edwards. It is difficult to see why he did so because he doesn’t apply Edwards’ conclusions to his theory of the Sabbath. For Moltmann the Sabbath here remains an end in itself; it never progresses from its first creation-reach. Moltmann actually arrives at the opposite consequences Edwards arrives at. “The goal and completion of every ... doctrine must be the doctrine of the sabbath”, says Moltmann. Edwards says *the glory of God – in fact God Himself, is creation’s – and “moral agents” – “one” and “great end”*. Although, according to Moltmann, God “on the sabbath and through the sabbath ‘completed’ his creation”, and although “men and women on the sabbath and through the sabbath perceive the reality in which they live and which they themselves are as God’s creation”, it says not much if Christ indeed – “on the sabbath and through the sabbath” – is not its **first presupposition**. It says not much if God’s glory in the Son – “on the sabbath and through the sabbath” – is not its **last, superior and ultimate end**.

It seems Moltmann argues in circles – *creation perceiving creation* – and not eschatologically with *God’s glory* through **Jesus Christ** the climactic “goal and completion”. Although “The sabbath opens creation for its future”, and “on the sabbath the redemption of the world is celebrated in anticipation”, **for Moltmann, “the sabbath is itself the presence of eternity in time, and a foretaste of the world to come”**. **For Moltmann**, the Sabbath means “the world to come” has not yet and never will be reached but in and through *creation* itself.

**For Moltmann**, the difference between the Sabbath’s meaning “as God’s creation” and the meaning of the universe “as God’s creation”, stretches no further than the difference between “the world” as “creation” and “the world” as “nature”: “The observance of the sabbath became the identifying mark of Jews in exile. In the same way, the doctrine of the sabbath of creation becomes the identifying mark of the biblical doctrine of creation, distinguishing it from the interpretation of the world as

**nature.**

In other words – if I'm not mistaken – the Sabbath indicates the divinely created "creation" over against a naturally evolved "nature"? I'm at a loss about what this observation of Moltmann's might mean; it compares quite irrelevant things. What is obvious though, is that Jesus Christ for Moltmann is neither the Sabbath's first cause, reason and effect, nor its *ultimate end and goal*. The Sabbath – which is 'creation' is "distinguished" and identified against yet another aspect of "the world" – which also is "nature". Moltmann doesn't distinguish the Sabbath against its *great, ultimate and superior "goal and completion"* which it *serves* and is *inferior and subordinated* to, the *glory of God* in the face of Jesus Christ! "It is the sabbath" – creation – (says Moltmann) "which manifests the world's identity as creation". Creation is "sanctified and blessed", not by its *chief and ultimate end "the glory of God"*, but "it is the sabbath" which invests creation, with worth and splendour.

The Sabbath Commandment in Exodus 20 should be understood according to its climactic construction, and the same conclusion will be reached – that the Sabbath itself stands in need of grace and finds its "goal and completion" in "the glory of God" **through Jesus Christ**.

Keep in mind that Ex.20:8-11 not only is the Commandment based on the creation-event of Genesis 2 – it is an exposition of it. The Commandment explains and interprets the creation-event of the Seventh Day.

According to the literal sequence of the Hebrew:

**Remember**

<i>the Day of Six days are</i>	<i>the Rest yours</i>	to keep it holy to work and do <u>all your work</u> to the LORD <u>your God</u> <u>no work</u>
<i>The Seventh Day</i>	<i>a Rest</i>	
You	shall do	

**You.**

your son, your daughter,  
your man-servant, your maidservant,  
your cattle, your stranger  
within your gates

**Because**

<i>in six days</i>	made	the LORD	the heaven and earth, the sea and <u>all that in them is</u>
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<b><u>Thus</u></b>	rested	<u>He</u>	<i>on the Day the Seventh</i>
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<b><u>Therefore</u></b>	blessed	<u>the LORD</u>	<i>the Day of the Rest and <u>sanctified it</u></i>
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God – "the LORD He the LORD" – is foremost. The Day of the Rest He sanctified – its holiness is God's. The LORD He the LORD blessed it – God's is its blessedness. *On the Day the Seventh* He rested – God's is the Sabbath's peace. Whatever the Sabbath and whatever the creation and man may have received, they received from their first Cause and last End, even the LORD He the LORD your God in His glory – even in Jesus Christ – even in resurrection from the dead!

It does not say in the giving of the Law that God on the Seventh Day finished, because the Law cannot finish just as it cannot begin God's creation. God's mercy, love and grace do. God, in creating, exercised mercy, love and grace; He in creating showed forth his intent, revealed his eternal will in time – which is mercy, love and grace. "God on the Seventh Day finished" – it says when God created – not when God gives the Law. Only in mercy, love and grace are all God's works of creation "completed", "finished". The creation story doesn't tell of man's works – only of God's. And the word of the Scriptures there of God's act in that He on the Seventh Day "finished" the creation, tells of Jesus Christ the Author and the Finisher of the Faith. If the creation Sabbath had not shown forth Jesus Christ, the Scriptures would not have said that God on the Seventh Day finished and that He in having finished, rested, in having finished, blessed, and in having finished, sanctified the Day of the Rest – the Rest of the LORD your God.

The Sabbath Commandment though, has no other aim. Its chief aim and sole purpose is to glorify God, to put him first and last – not only as Creator, but as Finisher. Man's duty excludes to finish! Even through the Law does God show mercy and love – even his forgiveness, because only Jesus Christ, on behalf of man "finishes" God's will. It is the Sabbath commandment that shows God's grace in this way. It says, "You shall not work"! – but rest in Jesus Christ who for your sake finishes God's will and power! The Law right at its ending says God "sanctified" the Seventh Day – He in the Law reserves the "finishing" of the mystery of godliness for Another who is his loving kindness. Said Christ the Sabbath was made for man – He on the first Sabbath Day in man's stead "finished" all God's works and all His desire. God brought in mercy first; only afterwards the Law. The Sabbath's chief aim and sole purpose is to put God beneath and above every principality and dominion and before and after every name that is named in the heavens and upon the earth. The Name of God is written in the firmament – "And His Name is called: **the Word of God!**" (Rv.19:13) The Sabbath *manifests the world's identity* not merely *as creation* but as God's creation and as God's creation created anew through Jesus Christ. Creation since the death

**and resurrection of Jesus Christ**, is finished, exists, is upheld, and is blessed and hallowed: “God thus of the Seventh Day spoke: God the Seventh Day rested.” “God the Seventh Day finished . . . all his works.”

“*The goal and completion of the Christian doctrine of the Sabbath is Jesus Christ*, for in ‘*and through*’ Jesus Christ as its *Fountain*, “*God ‘completed’ his creation*” – even ‘*on*’ Jesus Christ as its sure Foundation, “*God ‘completed’ his creation*”.

“*On and through the Sabbath men and women perceive the reality in which they live and which they themselves are as God’s creation*”, says Moltmann. The Sabbath cannot justly be perceived as *the reality in which men and women live* – simply “*as creation*”. The Sabbath is everything but an ecological phenomenon and it cannot serve an ecological end “*in itself*”.

Says Moltmann, “*the doctrine of the sabbath of creation becomes the identifying mark of the biblical doctrine of creation, distinguishing it (both “creation” and its “biblical doctrine”) from the interpretation of the world as nature*” or the world as the product of natural processes merely. (Emphasis CGE) In the light of the Sabbath Day, it becomes understandable why the ‘*creation*’ of God isn’t simply ‘*nature*’ or isn’t an end in itself, but in truth was created and is creation to the sole end of the glory of God through Jesus Christ. The Sabbath must make this clear in order to be of any *Christian* meaning and value – or it should be discarded totally as a form of idolatry and self-righteousness.

“*The Sabbath opens creation for its future*” – which should not be meant ecologically, but Christologically. Because, again (in Moltmann’s own words), “*on the Sabbath the redemption of the world is celebrated in anticipation.*” It must be added though, that since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians not only *celebrate the Sabbath in anticipation of redemption*, because Jesus had come and had accomplished redemption. *On the Sabbath the redemption of the world* that Christ Jesus already had wrought, *is celebrated in remembrance* – “therefore **remember** the Sabbath Day to keep it holy”! The *redemption* that Christ had wrought, *in anticipation*, was, and, is, the Sabbath’s whole and only end in the **creation** of it. But the *redemption* that Christ had wrought **in actual fact** had become the whole and only end of the fulfilling of its anticipating significance, in the **resurrection of Jesus** from the dead. In this sense ultimately – and in this historical sense purely and only – “*the Sabbath opens creation for its future*”. **Creation from the beginning had no future outside Jesus Christ. Christ had no future apart from his future as the resurrected Jesus.** The Sabbath Day also, had no future outside Jesus Christ and without His resurrection from the dead. And if the Sabbath **has** no future, **in Jesus Christ**, it has **no** future at all, and, as well, no **present**.

That “*the Sabbath is itself the presence of eternity in time*” is an unwarranted assertion and certainly not “*biblical*”. The Scriptures **never** allots the Sabbath Day such meaning in “*itself*”! Where and when the Sabbath Day does seem to have the meaning of *the presence of eternity in time*, it does so on the basis of its eschatological significance – its prophetic pertinence that “**points to**” the eternal *future* as well as the eternal **past** of ‘**God in Jesus Christ**’. The Sabbath is cosmic eschatological sign of the Covenant of Grace.

The praises of God’s glory, even of His reciprocal **self**-enjoyment, is creation’s primary value and worth, its eventual *goal and completion*. The glory of God consists in His enjoyment of creation’s enjoyment **of Him**. Therefore did He plan and create creation; therefore willed and made He the Sabbath Day – because also by His enjoyment of **creation’s** enjoyment of Him, is God glorified in **Himself**. How great is God’s love “to us-ward” that He created the Seventh Day for no reason or purpose than man’s enjoyment of Him in the praises of his glory. It is **God’s enjoyment of Himself** which manifests the world’s identity as **His creation and which sanctifies it and blesses it unto His own glory**. This is the biblical doctrine of the Sabbath that distinguishes creation from its interpretation as nature. This is the biblical doctrine of the Sabbath Day even from the first. From the very beginning *the Seventh Day concerning which God spoke*, concerned the doctrine of Jesus Christ. For there is no glory of God and no glory to his Name but in and through the Word of His Self-revelation in condescending love, grace and mercy *to us-ward*, Who, through the redemption He wrought, is the *fountain-head*, the *goal and completion*, of all the praises of God’s glory – even Jesus Christ The Resurrected From the Dead.

The Sabbath can only be “*The Feast of Creation*” as long as it is The Feast of Jesus Christ, the Feast of the Resurrection!



## 7.7.1.13.

**The Sabbath: “The Feast of the Beginning”**  
**(Moltmann: “Sunday: The Feast of the Beginning”)**

*“Curiously enough, in the Christian traditions, and especially the traditions of the Western Church, creation is generally only presented as ‘the six days’ work’. The ‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’ is much neglected, or even overlooked altogether. It would seem as if Christian theology considered that both the sabbath commandment to Israel and the sabbath of creation were repealed and discarded when Jesus set aside the sabbath commandment by healing the sick on that day. As a result, God is viewed as the one who in his essential being is solely ‘the creative God’, as Paul Tillich says; and it follows from this that men and women too can only see themselves as this God’s image if they become ‘creative human beings’. The God who ‘rests’ on the sabbath, the blessing and rejoicing God, the God who delights in his creation, and in his exaltation sanctifies it, recedes behind this different concept ...”.*

Moltmann here recognises and presumes one thing of utmost importance: **“The ‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’”!** Not the fact though that *“the ‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’ is much neglected, or even overlooked altogether”* – has always been the matter with Christian doctrine of the Sabbath, but the logical and natural and inevitable **consequence of what constitutes** this *“‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’”*. Had it been recognised by Christian doctrine of twenty centuries minus one, it would always have been presumed and would always have received its proper appreciation – the way it was appreciated in the first century and in the New Testament. There it is seen how Jesus **to the glorifying of God through his very own life** worked towards *“‘completion’ ... through ‘the seventh day’”*: in the sharing of his own life with the sick in their healing, in the offering up of his own life in the forgiveness of sinners, and in the taking up of his own life again to the glory of God and the *completion* of “all the works of God”: on and *“through ‘the seventh day’”!*

*“As a result”*, says Moltmann, of *theology’s neglect and overlooking of “the ‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’”*, *“God is viewed as the one who in his essential being is solely ‘the creative God’”*. Dead-on correct. But what should be the alternative? If *theology* gave *“the ‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’”* its due importance and attention God would have been *“viewed”* quite differently, would He not! *“In his essential being”*, God would not only have been viewed as *“solely ‘the creative God’”*, but primarily as the **Redeemer-God** *“in-his-essential-being”!* God in **creation** is none other than and no different from **The-in-his-essential-Being-Redeemer-God**.

**He** explains the goal and *“completion”* of the creation. **He** is its cause and creation, its *ultimate end*, its very *“completion”* and Fullness ... this God, thus acting, “on the Seventh Day”.

How can Moltmann argue a *‘setting aside’* of the Sabbath on the basis of Jesus’ *healings on that day*, if through Jesus’ *healings*, God on *that day* the Sabbath Day, is and reveals Himself **the God of redemption and salvation**? True conclusion of the events and their implications is that this in His Rest *rejoicing* God already in the Sabbath Day is the **suffering** God revealed **in redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead**.

**God’s works** of the creation-Sabbath perfectly correspond to **Jesus’ healings on that day** and no *‘setting aside’* in the sense of a disregard for it, but the very opposite of it, must be deduced from Jesus’ *healings on that day*. These works – works of *“rest”*, *“completion”*, *“blessing and rejoicing”*, *delight in his creation*, *“exaltation”* and *sanctification* – in fact and in essence are **of the Sabbath itself** its *‘completion’* and its *sanctity*. **Jesus’ healings on that day** meant exactly **God, in his exaltation**, *sanctifying* the Sabbath Day. What is God’s *exaltation*? It is Jesus who glorifies the Father – **John 17** – entering upon the glorifying of God in a suffering that reaches across death to resurrected life!

If in the case of the **creation, God’s “completion”** happened through His will and works of the Seventh Day, then, in the case of the **redemption**, also **Jesus’ healing on that day**, meant the *“completion”* of God’s will and work – “I come to do thy will o God!” **Jesus**, doing and *completing* God’s will and works, initiates *“completion”* of God’s works once for all and absolutely – even to the creation of the world. **Jesus’ healing on that day the Sabbath**, meant He would **conquer** sickness and death and sin *on that day the Sabbath* “Rest” of God. The Lord in his *exaltation* even the Lord **Himself** means the end **and** reason, the goal **and** origin of creation. **He Himself in redeeming**, is God’s *“completion”* on and of the Sabbath Day.

If something in **principle** belongs in *“creation”*, then in **actuality** it belongs in Jesus Christ; and if in **actuality** it belongs in *“creation”*, then in **principle** it belongs in Jesus Christ. So that there is no *exaltation* of God that *sanctifies* the Sabbath Day but where its principle as well as its eventuality are constituted in Jesus Christ.

One **cannot** automatically speak of God’s *exaltation* – as purely belonging in *“creation”*. One **cannot** automatically speak of the Sabbath’s *sanctification* – as purely belonging in *“creation”*. One can **only** speak of God’s *exaltation* – and of the Sabbath’s *sanctification* through it – when **presupposing Jesus Christ**. One can **only** speak of

God's *exaltation* when understanding **Jesus' resurrection** as the **precondition** of God's *exaltation*. God cannot save face - His *exaltation in every respect*, **follows** His *exaltation in the unique* manifestation of it through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Sabbath is the end of the works of God, through Jesus Christ!

Of course Moltmann won't consider **Jesus' resurrection** in the same light as the **healings** of his Sabbath ministry because like the whole Church Moltmann thinks Jesus rose from the dead on the First Day of the week. Different days - different evaluations. If Moltmann realised that Jesus' resurrection and the Sabbath Day belong together, it would have been a different matter, because he still assumes - correctly - the **resurrection** meant the **Day's** sanctity. But he wrongly assumes that as a result of Jesus' "*liberty towards the law*", his **healings** meant the Sabbath's *profanity* and *dissemination*. Moltmann rescues himself from his predicament by **reversing** the **true** consequences, **improving** the *working days* to the status and *sanctity* of "*a sabbath feast*" while *Israel's sabbath* best was but a *foretaste* of what *working days* in the Christian era became. (p. 292)

But how could Jesus' **healings** on the Sabbath Day not correspond to God's act of **raising** Him from the dead, and how could it not be **the Sabbath Day reserved** - *sanctified* - for this work of God, for this work of *completion*, of *healing*, of *rest*, of *blessing*, and finally of eternal life?

**Or do** we in fact find God's resurrection of Jesus from the dead, **on the Sabbath Day** the Seventh Day of the week "concerning which God thus spoke" and "third day according to the Scriptures" of Passover Feast concerning which the prophets thus spoke - and not on the First Day of the week?

*"It would seem as if Christian theology considered that both the sabbath commandment to Israel and the sabbath of creation were repealed and discarded when Jesus set aside the sabbath commandment by healing the sick on that day."*

I still haven't received my German copy, and am forced to judge from the English script. According to the English Moltmann here expresses his surprise at "*Christian theology*" for *repealing and discarding* "*the sabbath commandment to Israel and the sabbath of creation*". Yet he himself speaks of Jesus '*setting aside*' "*the sabbath commandment*" as were it most natural and goes without saying! Moltmann's honestly cannot be an unequivocal persuasion of the Sabbath. For the Sabbath's **one reason and purpose** - the great value of its Day, of its creation and its institution, and of its doctrine and theology - is to provide and protect true perspective, true knowledge and true

appreciation of God's working in and through **Jesus Christ**, and of **God's glory** in the face of Jesus Christ. The Sabbath by its very design, cause and creation, **is to worship** God **through our Lord Jesus Christ**. The Sabbath can do no better and no more. If it does - if it could improve on this its divine essence and virtue - it would fail its own creation as well as its Creator. This distinguishes the Sabbath **above** the *working days* - it does not **equate** the *working days* with the Sabbath Day.

Moltmann treats on the Sabbath as were it different *sabbaths* - the one "*the sabbath of creation*"; the other a Sabbath by the "*commandment to Israel*". The one ("*the sabbath of creation*") could not really have been "*repealed and discarded*" because "*curiously enough*" it was the mistake of "*Christian theology*". The other *sabbath* - the one of the *commandment* - Jesus "*set aside*" because it must have been irreconcilable with the principle that prompted His "*healing the sick on that day*"!

This then must be why it is possible for Moltmann to deny that the Sabbath had been abrogated. He must have meant the Law of the Seventh Day had been *abolished*, not the "*sabbath of creation*"! This must explain "*the difference and the parallels ... for the sabbath* (on the one hand) *and the sabbath commandment* (on the other hand)". (285)

Here is how Moltmann gets around **the Law** (which he must be obsessed with being so much an obstacle to his theology of the Sabbath) **that restricts the Sabbath Day to the Seventh Day of the week**: "*He (Jesus) did not profane the law and the cult. He did not abolish the sabbath in favour of good works and good working days. On the contrary, he raised working days* (the "six days thou shalt labour") *into the messianic festivity of life of which Israel's sabbath is a unique foretaste. Jesus' proclamation of the imminent kingdom makes the whole of life a sabbath feast.*" (p. 292, emphasis CGE)

Moltmann says the same thing about the *sanctity* of the Seventh Day, "*God sanctified the sabbath because on that day he rested from creation; so his people are to sanctify it too ... Later on the sabbath year is extended to the earth ... People sanctify the sabbath ... by recognising the whole of reality as God's creation ... Sanctifying the sabbath means being entirely free ... means being wholly present in the presence of God*" ... on every day regardless all year round. (pp. 285 / 286) To be "holy" or "sanctified", in effect means to be *extended*, to be *wholly*, and *entirely free*! To be holy has never presupposed God's special *presence* restricted to a special day. It has never meant God's exclusive esteem for the Sabbath Day but eventually became obvious to have been his regard for all days of *existence* alike. And so on. Just the old and customary thing traditionally based on Romans 14, "One person regards the day; the next regards every day" ... **a Sabbath!** Moltmann just says it more beautiful

than ever. More scholarly. More crafty and more cunning than ever! Yet as empty and false as ever.

The sanctity of the Sabbath is not based in the day itself, but in the deed of God to which God Himself attributes that day its holiness and exclusiveness. God's deed of the Sabbath Day is not his six *working days*' deed. Creation did not come about through God's doing of the Sabbath Day – the Seventh Day came about through it. God's act of the Seventh Day is the Seventh Day's only. By this work or by these works of God of the Seventh Day He elevates it above the level of the six days of his very own, yet not like or on par works. For God's works of the Sabbath Day are different, of another kind, of a higher purpose. That is what it means that the Sabbath Day is holy or sanctified – the fact that it is God's doing and that it is His – even in the context of creation – extra the ordinary doing.

Exactly the case with Jesus the Messiah. He distinguished and separated and lifted out the Sabbath Day above the *working days*. Its holiness meant its holiness and not the *profanity* or *sanctity* of the *working days*. Jesus *raised working days into the messianic festivity of life of which Israel's sabbath is a unique foretaste*, and did so precisely through His raising of the Sabbath Day even higher into the *present messianic festivity of Life*. Jesus through His *proclamation* and ministry *raised the Sabbath Day above the working days of the messianic festivity of life!* He *raised the Sabbath Day above the promised foretaste that made Israel's Sabbath so unique!* Jesus added uniqueness to the uniqueness of the Sabbath Day. God by the present kingdom – of Jesus Christ's – elevated the Sabbath day above its previous status and above the status of every lofty day of *the whole of life*, even of the life which He has made into a '*sabbath feast*'. Because the deed by which God *exalted the Sabbath* Day – even the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead – was so much more *exalted* than his deeds He restricted the six *working days* to – even the *working days of the present messianic festivity of life*.

The whole Bible – the Gospels included – knows of but one Sabbath Day, whether mentioned generically (e.g. Lk.23:56, “according to the commandment”), or specifically, “the Seventh Day” ... of the week (e.g. Hb.4:4). “The Sabbath of creation” is the one *commanded* in the “Commandment” – the Fourth of “The Law”.

And never has “Christian theology” when it “repealed and discarded” it, thought of the Seventh Day ‘*Creation*’ Sabbath as different from the Sabbath meant in the “Commandment”.

But Moltmann is absolutely right where he observes, “Curiously enough, in the Christian traditions ... creation is generally only presented as ‘the six days’ work.” And that “The ‘completion’ of creation through ‘the seventh day’ is much neglected, or even overlooked altogether.”

Is it not because for many years and centuries now, in fact ever since Christ took upon Himself the form of man, creation can no longer wholly occupy true to kind Christian thought? Do I now justify the “Christian theology” I have a moment ago denounced for perverting Christian Doctrine and Faith? In fact, yes! “Christian theology” correctly should occupy itself with its own – with Christ the Beginning and the Finishing, the First and the Last and the Fullness of the *cause, the goal and the end* of the mystery of the ages now having been made known unto eternal salvation. The Sabbath Day belongs to Christianity's own!

Only the *New Creation* will look back in order to remember *creation!* The Law says, Remember The Day The Rest! ... not remember *creation per se*, not creation for its own sake, not creation in itself, like a revving car spinning in its own tracks but the flying mud despite getting no further. The Bible – the whole Bible – knows no Sabbath other than the eschatological and therefore Christian Day of Worship-Rest. Christian Faith through Jesus Christ has reached the end, has come to Jerusalem above. It acquainted itself with the Sabbath Day under that circumstantial, existential Truth. That justifies “Christian theology” that all this time has been pre-occupied with Christian Faith and neither with “the sabbath commandment to Israel”, nor with “the sabbath of creation”.

But “Christian theology” is not justified in the manner it busied itself with the Sabbath Day and its doctrine and its ethics and its theology as though it is not Christian doctrine of the Sabbath, not Christian ethics of the Sabbath, not Christian theology of the Sabbath. “Christian theology”, since Justin, was told and was made to believe the Sabbath's essential Author and Finisher is Jewish Law, and not Jesus Christ. It was told and made to believe the Christian Day of Worship-Rest was newly created in another day – a day never heard of before and unknown to patriarch as to prophet as to poet as to apostle. Unknown in fact to the Lord of the Sabbath Day Himself! “Christian theology” failed to recognise it believed Justin Martyr and not the Bible. As simple as that – the reason why “the ‘completion’ ... through ‘the seventh day’ is much neglected, or even overlooked altogether.”

For men and women too, the meaning of their lives got identified with work and busy activity on the Sabbath Day no different from on the six *working days!* Instead of “being wholly present in the presence of God” the *messianic festivity of life* has receded behind this different concept of the Sabbath Day, that *pushed away, relegated to insignificance the rest, the feast, and joy in existence* which ONLY the Sabbath Day finds its “goal and completion” in.

“The ‘completion’ of creation” – Genesis 2 the first verses – reads that God the Seventh Day finished what he had “made” and what He had “created” – in fact that God finished all the works that He had made in

that He created it ... ready for the **addition** of its finishing and completion, that is, ready for its fullness and fulfilment, ready for its “rest”! Three verbs each for a specific deed or work of God and no one like the other in meaning – “made”, “created”, “finished”. All three of which – and two exclusively – are used for God’s work of the Seventh Day! God’s “rest” of the Seventh Day was as much His act or work by exertion as his “works” on and of the six ‘*working days*’ was an act or work of His by exertion. But it also was “completing” and **different!** God’s **deeds** made the days one by one; the days did not give rise to God’s deeds. (Genesis doesn’t know about evolution.) God’s **deeds** are that which also made the Seventh Day, and made it what it was: “The Day the Rest” (the Hebrew). The Sabbath came about as the result of God’s acting in “finishing”. With this deed of the Seventh Day of finishing and its corollaries, God’s blessing, sanctification and resting, He not only added “*completion*” to his works of the first six ‘*working*’ days – He gave “*completion*” **to his works of the Seventh Day**. He in “*completion*” gave sanctity to the Seventh Day, in “*completion*” gave blessing to the Seventh Day and in “*completion*” founded his own Rest of and on the Seventh Day! Without the Seventh Day – rather – without **God’s works** of the Seventh Day whereby He “made” the Seventh Day what it is, “the Day the Rest” – “*creation*” as a *whole* would not have been “*whole*”, fulfilled, “made”, “finished”, “*completed*”! It means, God did not create more “creation” in the sense of “*world*” or “*universe*” or “*nature*” on the Seventh Day, but He added something to it which it itself did not possess without God’s **deeds on that day**. It means, the Sabbath was not *profaned*, nor the six working days *sanctified*. It is not creation that finishes creation, but **God** – which inevitably implies that it is **God** that gives the Sabbath Day *sanctity* and *uniqueness*. God, in and through Jesus Christ, gives “*creation*” – including the Seventh Day – *completion*. Having “finished” “**all his works**” on the Seventh Day, it means God in **working**, sanctified the Seventh Day – separated it from and elevated it above the *working days*. The Sabbath’s distinctiveness entirely relies on a doing – and that the doing of God Himself – so that the Seventh Day is so much different from the *working days* as God’s doing on the Seventh Day is different from His doing on the *working days*. As long and as much as the **deeds** that God performed on these two categories of days will be different and of a different nature and value, so long and so much will the **two categories of days** differ – the one category represented in the six ‘*working days*’, and the other category represented in the **Seventh** Day only.

Only Christian language and Christian point of reference can properly speak of creation. The unbelieving Jew is unable to properly speak of creation. How much less infidels who believe in evolution and

not in God. But least of all can a Christian who believes in evolution speak of creation. For he cannot properly speak of God either as the Creator or as the Redeemer. To better speak of the Creator is to properly speak of the Re-creator. To better speak of the creation is to properly speak of its New Creation. The Christian is only able to speak of the being of creation from the standpoint of its having been saved from non-being. The Christian can only speak of creation as object of the doing of the subject God, since it has been redeemed by God and cannot be its own subject in redemption.

(How, from a Christian perspective, can creation be its own predicate in creation – how, from a Christian perspective, can evolution be possible?)

Christian language and thought of the Sabbath day is possible only if the Sabbath totally – unreservedly – **is considered** “Christian”, and if **it**, is considered totally – unreservedly – “**Christian**”. Only when no point of contact remains between Christian Faith and Jewish faith or any other “faith” (or “religion”) for that matter, is it possible to properly speak of the Genesis Sabbath Day. Moltmann will not agree – not ever; therefore Moltmann not ever will be able to properly speak of the Sabbath as Christian Sabbath Day. And to speak of the Sabbath Day but not as Christian Sabbath Day avails nothing, means nothing, says nothing. Speaking on the Sabbath Day from the Christian point of view **in any wise reservedly** will always make it impossible to reach even as far as the depth or height of thought on the Sabbath Day as the unbelieving Jew is capable of.

**Not to speak of the Sabbath Day in the language and from the vantage point of Resurrection Faith is a waste of words.** To say the Sabbath isn’t Day of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is to make void the Word of God.

Unbelievable! Still the Sundayarian insists that exactly for the reason **hereof**, the **First** Day of the week should be the Christian Day of Worship!

Chronology? – No one spoke of chronology? The conclusions are natural. Christian Faith indicates the Seventh Day Sabbath of creation and the Law are **eschatological** – they have Christ in sight; they are because of Christ, and have Christ in mind; they emerge from Christ and they approach Christ. Creation and Law witness of the Creator who is the Redeemer Saviour, the First Cause and the Last End and the Present. His Name is “I am” – “I am (the Present) the Amen (the Last End) of the creation of God (its First Cause)”. (Rv.3) **It follows without saying** The Day of God’s “*completion*” and works of fullness and fulfilment is the Day and “*The Feast of the Beginning*”. One can double check against the chronology and sequence of “all the works of God” – it will confirm it.

Nowhere and no how is the First Day given a thought by Old or New Testament as Day of Worship-Rest of God! It **could never be** and never **could have been** the Day of Jesus' resurrection. It simply is impossible even to check on the chronology because there is no chronology that has to do with the First Day of the week in this context. The Bible right through talks of the Seventh Day Sabbath as: "the Sabbath of the LORD you God"! **That tells the full story** of the Sabbath's presence **in the eventuality** of the Day of Jesus' resurrection from the dead: because there, it is this God, doing, working in and to the exceeding greatness of His Power To Us-Ward. It in eternity could not have been **expected** otherwise; it in eternity could not have **been** otherwise. It in eternity could not have been the **First** Day of the week.

*"... Men and women ... can only see themselves as ('the creative') God's image if they become 'creative human beings'."* It happens when *"creation is generally only presented as 'the six days' work"* and *"the 'completion' of creation through 'the seventh day' is ... neglected"*.

It simply means one who believes in God will also be one who believes God's Sabbath Day. In the last analysis it means he is a Christian who finds the Sabbath's and *the completion* of all God's works in Jesus Christ and in Him only. **How** is *"the 'completion' of creation through 'the seventh day' "*, *"neglected"*? It is *neglected* through not giving God due honour and *glory* and the LORD of the Sabbath Day not his **place** which is the Beginning and the End of *the 'completion'* of "all the works of God". which is much, much more than *"the 'completion' of creation"* merely! **It is in fact** *"the 'completion' of creation"* and the events and the meaning of **"the Seventh Day"**. The events and the meaning of "the Seventh Day" are *"the completion"* of every plan and promise of God to create, to save or to restore. It is *"the completion"* and the complement of each prophecy fulfilled in Jesus Christ; it is *"the completion"* of the "fullness of time"; it is *"the completion"* of the mystery of the ages and *"the completion"* of its revelation. *"The 'completion' of creation" is, "the New Creation"*!

Only in this perspective may *men and women see themselves as the creative God's image – if they become the redeemed human beings* of **His** creation and possession ... if they become a Sabbath-People, a Psalm 23 People, an Exodus 15-16 People – a People of the Rest of the LORD. **What Rest is this but Jesus Christ?** *God is the one who in his essential being is* and always has been **the redeeming and saving** 'creative God'. The Sabbath has no importance of being but to portray and serve this truth about God – that all truth and the one truth about God is found (revealed) and founded (determined and established) in Jesus Christ. If it doesn't apply to the Sabbath Day, there's no Sabbath Day that can be Christian Faith. If it does apply, then there is but one Sabbath Day that

can be Christian Faith. The moment of truth for the Sabbath Day is Jesus' resurrection from the dead. The Sabbath is prophetic (eschatological): it sees Christ the Risen Lord. It is cosmic: of God's creation – this specific day, "the Seventh Day the Rest of the LORD your God".

"Sabbath", or the Hebrew verb the noun is derived from, when used with God its Proprietor or Subject, never means "stop", because God if He "stopped", would stop to be God. Both Hebrew words require and in fact imply the living God actively exerting Himself towards the attainment of his will. Both words, when used of God, mean God's "work" of "rest" and are summarised in Genesis 2 as being God's "works". Never, 'stop'!

Because the Story tells us, we are permitted to ask: When – on which day, in what day – did God rest? Because the Story tells us, we are permitted to find it was the Seventh Day of God's creating and of his creation. Because the Story also tells us, we are further allowed to ask: in what manner – on which supposition – did God rest? Because the story tells us, we are indeed allowed to find it was God – because it was He who "worked", who finished, who blessed, who sanctified, who rested.

Now tell me the Story tells us not it was God acting towards us and for us in Christ in power of resurrection life! Then tell me the Story tells us not it was Sabbath's time!

Christians should celebrate the First Day of the week?! *Jesus NEVER set aside the sabbath commandment by healing the sick on that day. He set aside the Sabbath Day, by healing the sick on that day* consigning it to the confirmation of it in rising from the dead, "Sabbath's-time" – the LORD'S DAY once for all eternity!

#### 7.7.1.14.

**"Historical Time" – The creation for the sake of the Sabbath;**  
**"Eschatological Time" – The Sabbath for the sake of the**  
**Creation**

*"... God who 'rests' on the sabbath ... recedes behind this different concept ... (of His being) viewed as the one who in his essential being is solely 'the creative God'. ... So for men and women too, the meaning of their lives is identified with work and busy activity; and rest, the feast, and their joy in existence are pushed away, relegated to insignificance because they are non-utilitarian. ... But according to the biblical traditions creation and the sabbath belong together."*

How the change of one's views about the Sabbath can change one's views about God and life! Nevertheless there isn't much to get over-joyed about in Moltmann's *"entirely God's creation"* because *"men and women"* are consoled in nothing more or better than *"creation"*. *"They recognise that as God's property creation is inviolable; and they*

*sanctify the day through their joy in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of creation."*

Moltmann's ideas about creation, the nature of God and of justification and redemption are involved here; and neither of them are Christian. In the first place Moltmann demands that one must think of God as the one who claims creation as his **without** intervention through redemption and solely by the mandate of being Creator. Creation isn't **redeemed** creation; it *entirely is God's creation*, yet "*the world*", interpreted as "*nature*" purely – as were everything as created by Him, and men and women the obedient subjects of his "*inviolable property*". Just like the Jews would think of themselves as the keepers of God's *inviolable* Sabbath. The Christian presupposition receives not the least recognition, that only **saved** creation and only **redeemed** men and women are enabled and privileged to share the "*joy in existence as God's creatures*".

Moltmann's idea of 'redemption' is totally another than the redemption through the blood of Christ. His is the averting – without Christ – of the impending ecological disaster facing the earth. No second advent of the Man Jesus Christ on the clouds of the heavens that through total destruction of this world will bring about a new earth and new heavens and that will establish on this earth the Kingdom of God "incorruptible" and without death and destruction! The *belief* that the creation of God realises only *within the fellowship of Christian Faith*, is non-existent here.

The 'kept' Sabbath Day of Moltmann's remains "*utilitarian*" a righteousness of **works**; it still is one of "*work and busy activity*"; still an opportunity for human "*intervention*" all be it one of *laissez faire* – 'unrestricted freedom for private interest'. The *rest, feast and joy of "creatures within the fellowship of creation"* simply has become man's 'non-intervention' or laziness.

This *sabbath* of 'non-intervention' sloth does not proclaim Jesus the Joy of man's desire. It is a Christ-less and therefore a **restless** day. It has no "*peace*", except "as the world gives" – "*within the fellowship of creation*". "*The peace of the sabbath*" Moltmann speaks of, "*is peace with God*" **on condition**. "*But*", says he, "*this divine peace encompasses not merely the soul*" – as were the *soul* of least importance. "*But the body too*", says he, because the *body* is of first importance for "*that peace with nature which many people are seeking today, in the face of the growing destruction of the environment. But there will never be peace with nature without the experience and celebration of God's sabbath.*" (Emphasis CGE) Such a 'Sabbath', "*is peace with God*" **on man's conditions**.

It is man's keeping of the Sabbath that must save the present world. **But** (for emphatic contradiction), the **real** *peace of the sabbath is peace with "God first of all"* as well as in the **last** analysis! Such '*divine*' *peace encompasses not merely the body, but the soul first of all*. It is *that peace with God* which is His gift to a *seeking world today in the face of the growing destruction of the foundation of the Christian Peace and Rest*. *There will never be peace with God* (or with nature for that matter), *without the experience and celebration of God's Rest* – acquired, accomplished and provided through the suffering, death and resurrection of **Jesus Christ!** "*The peace of the sabbath is peace with God*" which the Kingdom of heaven earned and provided – the *fellowship* that makes it possible that even the Sabbath may be the Day of Christian Worship. The Sabbath **itself** stands in need of "*the peace ... with God*". Just like *men and women "within the fellowship of creation"*, the Sabbath must needs receive from God in order to point to God. It must ... at the free decision and empathy of the Lord of the Sabbath. Like that Sabbath Day when Jesus and his disciples walked through the cornfields. **Ever anew**, as the New Creation of the Kingdom of God "on earth as it is heaven", week by week, *within the fellowship of the Peace and rule of Jesus Christ!* As the Body that is Christ's realises – so the

Sabbath Day the Body's Day of Worship-Rest. Or no Sabbath Day. *The meaning of the Sabbath – the meaning of its peace and celebration – should be the meaning which is that of the lives of men and women too*. It is *the joy and peace and feast in existence as God's creatures within the fellowship of redemption*. It is the relationship of *men and women with God*, of *men and women saved* and celebrating their **salvation** *within the fellowship of The Elect* – the Ecclesia or Church. The Sabbath's **meaning, peace and celebration "too"**, is *the rest, the feast, and the joy in existence by the grace of God through Jesus Christ*. The Sabbath is Messianic or it remains a relic from man's covenant of works and never could be of practical or spiritual service or worth *within God's Covenant of Grace or the fellowship of Christian Faith!* The Sabbath would not have been possible. A Sabbath Day purely of creation is as good as a Sabbath of the Jews purely.

"*If there is grace even in the preservation of the world*", says Moltmann in *The Future of Creation*, Chapter, *Justification and New Creation*, p. 149, "*then there must also be grace in the creation of the world, from the very beginning.*" How then does Moltmann find it possible to preach volumes full without applying the principles of what he preaches, namely the principles of Christian Faith which are *Grace*, even Jesus Christ and his merits and virtues "*from the very beginning*"? Genesis and the Sabbath of creation spell the Name of the Man of Nazareth crucified and raised from the dead in order to finish the works

of God through the establishing of His *Peace*. God “rested from his own works as God” – the horseman of the white horse, “the Word of God to whom it is given to conquer”.

That, is God’s Sabbath Rest: In that God the Word “conquered”, and, “finished”, it is the Day of Rest, Day of Peace, Day of Joy, Day of Celebration, **Day of Victory!** “It is the Day the **LORD** has made (through victory) – let us, rejoice in it”. It is the Day of Worship. Never forget, but “Remember!”: “God thus of the **Seventh** Day spoke: God on the **Seventh** Day did rest from all his works”! This is **Scripture!**

In the words of Emil Brunner whom Moltmann refers to under note 28 to Chapter 4 of *God in Creation*, “The kenosis (the self-abasement of Christ), which reaches its paradoxical climax in the Cross of Christ, begins with the creation of the world.” (*Dogmatics* 2, p. 19) “Any doctrine of creation and providence has a cross at its heart.” (Rust, *Science and Faith*, p. 189, Note 46, Par. 4 of *GC*.)

Under note 5 to Chapter 3, *The Knowledge of Creation*, with reference to Brunner, who “...himself would like to make John 1, not Genesis 1, the point of orientation for the Christian doctrine of creation. ... “Our messianic interpretation of the creation narratives in the Priestly Writing and the Yahwist does not ‘degrade’ these to something ‘provisional’ which Christianity has superseded. It absorbs them into the conditions of the messianic hope.””

Unfortunately Moltmann habitually forgets “The eschatological alignment of history towards the new creation”. (Note 7 with reference to K. Löwith) “Prospectivity within retrospection as the indispensable reflection of the historical sense: How is it possible to represent a past without losing sight of its unique prospective reality?” (Note 50, on Par. 5 with reference to “E. Husserl’s analysis of the sense of time”).

That is how one should represent the Biblical history of creation ... “without losing sight of its unique prospective reality” – the Word of God not only in creation but in its revelation; not only in its beginning but in its end; Christ not only as the pre-existent Christ but as the crucified and risen Jesus, because His *future (was) in His past*; His *fulfilled past* became *visible in His future*. (With reference to Ernst Bloch’s phraseologies – not to his ideas.) The Sabbath is both “historical time” and “eschatological time”. It also is “Messianic time”, and as “Messianic time” is historical, **and**, eschatological time.

In the “eschatological alignment of history towards the new creation” (Note 7 to Par. 3), the Sabbath becomes reality in that “Grace is really to be found in the divine preservation of the creature who closes himself against God”. (Moltmann, Note 31 Chapter 4. Also Flavel 31.01.02.)

Says Moltmann (p. 189 line 6), “History” and “creation” are eschatologically “aligned” “towards the new creation which is identical with redemption”. Says Jesus, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”. The Sabbath where redemption appeared, appears in creation.

Moltmann goes so far as to deny that man is creation’s “crown”, and instead, goes so far as to say the Sabbath is creation’s “crown”. (p. 187 first par.) We deny, and say the glory of God (Edwards, 13.03.02) is the crown of creation. God’s glory, is creation’s glory. Creation has no *glory* or *crown* that could be said belongs to it. From its creation, creation entirely depends on God acting towards it in grace and mercy. God acting in Jesus Christ towards creation is its crown and glory.

But all this is just saying that the creation stories are told on the basis that Grace finishes God’s creation. Seen in its full consequence fully contained in its first force, God created in mercy and through the beginning worked through Jesus Christ towards the exceeding greatness of His Power when He raised Him from the dead. Creation is eschatology – it has to do with Christ – or totally and unreservedly not at all has to do with Christ. It means God’s Rest of the Seventh Day was His Rest of resurrection from the dead in Jesus Christ – “ultimately”!

“It is impossible to understand the world properly as creation without a proper discernment of the sabbath” which should mean a discernment of the Sabbath Day as the Day of God’s finishing of all his works eschatologically as well as cosmically and historically **in the Day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**. (This is exactly Paul’s scope of vision as portrayed in Ephesians the first chapter and elsewhere.)

“The peace of the sabbath is a peace with God first of all.” It is “the Peace of God that transcends understanding” as Paul says, even as **Jesus** shares His peace – which is “The Crucified God” (Moltmann) in the laying down and taking up again of His Life the Life of God. The Creator God is the Resurrected Crucified God. It’s in the creation of the Seventh Day’s making, blessing, sanctification, finishing and rest of God – “as the creation story tells us, the whole creation of heaven and earth”.

“If we look at the biblical traditions that have to do with the belief in creation, we discover that the Sabbath is not a day of rest following six working days. On the contrary: the whole work of creation was performed for the sake of the sabbath. The sabbath is ‘the feast of creation’ as Franz Rosenzweig says. It was for the sake of this feast-day of the eternal God that heaven and earth were created, with everything that exists in them and lives ...”. (p. 277 par.3)

It is impossible to agree with Moltmann without great reservation. “*The biblical traditions ... have to do with the belief in creation*” ... No, they have to do with **Faith in God** and with believing the creation in consequence. And it means believing *it was for the sake of the eternal God that heaven and earth were created, with everything that exists in them and lives ... also “this feast-day”*. Also “*this feast-day*” the Sabbath Day was created for the sake of the eternal God and his glory “in the face of Christ”.

“*If we look at these biblical traditions*” (the two creation narratives of Genesis 2), says Moltmann, “*we discover that the Sabbath is not a day of rest following six working days*”.

No, the Sabbath is a “*day*”, it is “*a day of rest*”, and it does “*follow six working days*” or six days of **the creating work of God** – according to these “*biblical traditions*”. The Seventh Day though does in fact not follow six days of **man’s** labour, but precedes six days of man’s works. Nevertheless no value, virtue or truth of the Sabbath Day gets lost because of *the belief* in its creation and its sequence in creation or because of its reality as creation and within creation. *On the contrary*, much value, virtue and truth are *encompassed* and preserved in *the belief* in it. One doesn’t have to bring any change or mystical understanding into the “*biblical traditions*” in order to *discover* its full meaning reserved and unreserved, in the lines and in between the lines. One finds these ‘deep’ truths through believing the ‘*traditions*’ as they are and for what they are – the **true** story of the **real, creation**, of the world, the universe and, of the Sabbath!

Yes, *the Sabbath is not simply a day of rest following six working days. On the contrary: the whole work of creation was performed for the sake of this feast-day because it is feast-day of the eternal God and for the sake of the eternal God* – who on the Seventh Day of His creating “thus finishes” and “thus rests”.

**For the sake of God ... for the sake of man.** The Sabbath “was made for the sake of man” – which implies **God’s** work of man’s **redemption!** God’s *whole work of creation was performed for the sake of “the Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath Day”*. **For this reason only** *the Sabbath is ‘the feast’, and, “crown”, of creation. It was for the sake of this, the feast-day of the eternal God who acts in and through Jesus Christ towards the redemption of man and the salvation of all creation, that heaven and earth were created, with everything that exists in them and lives.* While reading Genesis 2 the Christian cannot help but read the fulfilment of the history of redemption through Jesus Christ. See Theron – e.g. p. 126.

### 7.7.1.15.

#### **The Sabbath and ‘Eschatological’ Time**

Refer p. 124, Chapter 5, *The Time of Creation*, Par. 4,

*Experience of Time in the History of God*

The era of time which Moltmann describes as “*historical time ... time determined by the sending forth of God’s promise and by the events of God’s faithfulness*”, **much rather** is “*eschatological time*” than the era of time which he explains as “*eschatological time*”, namely “*... time determined by the universal fulfilment of what was promised in historical time and what has dawned in the messianic time*”. (Emphasis CGE)

All time is “*eschatological time*”, but no time so much as **historical time as messianic-future time**. And that is the picture that Paul’s views on time and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ purvey. Paul is able to describe the “*turn of the Yom Yahweh*” (Schilder) in the event **in historical time** of the dying and resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ, as, “**in the fullness of time**”. That moment was the acme of eschatological time which means that moment was **absolutely filled** with the **Christ event**. That moment contained eternity because Christ contained it. That moment contained the Sabbath of God’s creation of the Seventh Day – God’s creation being “all the works of God” – and of the **completion** of “all the works of God”. Thus the Sabbath Day of God’s creation was absolutely filled with the Christ event. Would not the Sabbath Day in that great and awful day of Yahweh be the Day again to be filled absolutely with the Christ event?

Barth – for no other reason than this – has said, “*Christentum das nicht ganz und gar und restlos Eschatologie ist, hat mit Christus ganz und gar und restlos nichts zu tun.*”

In so far as “*historical time*” pointed to, had to do with, and had been fulfilled through and in Jesus the Messiah, it is “*eschatological time*”.

“*Eschatological time*” since its “*turn in the Day of Yahweh*” has not been receding though. It dwindles not away the farther from the Christ-event we progress in time, because the farther from its **past** “fullness”, the nearer to its **future** “fullness” in eschatological time we get. That is the point in time in which “*Messianic time*” **now finds itself** – the point where it is *Messianic eschatological time* in fact – looking its end-time fulfilment in the eye where the moment will again be **absolute fulfilment** by the **Christ event** in his Parousia.

There is a basic difference between Moltmann’s idea of what *eschatological time* is and e.g., Barth’s. And this difference clearly permeates Moltmann’s total conception of *creation* and *historical time*. Because *historical time* and *creation* for Moltmann are not *eschatological*



time, they totally and unreservedly have nothing to do with Christ! They are “creation” and / or “history” – only.

Moltmann categorically asserts, “*In the whole history of the Church, natural theology has never been set up as a rival to revealed theology ... It was always stated that natural theology conferred wisdom but not salvation ...*”. (Note 11 to Chapter 3, *The Knowledge of Creation*.) **Natural theology confers wisdom not salvation.** Again, in vain would one in Moltmann seek for a glimpse of Jesus Christ in “historical time” or in “creation”. While Moltmann seemingly is in agreement with Barth, he actually is at loggerheads with Barth, because Barth sees “historical time” as *the under currents of the Passover waters* which *surface* in messianic moments of historical time and in its fountainhead Jesus of Nazareth. **Barth sees messianic meaning in “historical time”.** It is messianic meaning that gives “historical time” eschatological meaning – that **makes**, of “historical time”, “eschatological time”!

Plainly stated Moltmann doesn’t find Christ in creation and therefore makes of it purely “natural theology”. So with his “sabbath” – it may bring the ‘rest’ of “wisdom”, but does not serve the Rest of God which is God’s Rest in Jesus Christ, and, in “historical” and “creation” time, is God’s rest on and of the Seventh Day of His creating and of His creation.

There is this logical and theological connection of inevitability between creation Sabbath and Resurrection Sabbath – between “historical time” and “eschatological time”, between cosmic time and “messianic time”. They both are actual, present and valid in both events. That is the Christian theological basis for the Sabbath Day. That explains its ethics.

“*The feast of creation is the feast of completion or consummation – the consummation of creation which is realised through this feast (the Sabbath).*” So it thoroughly and exclusively is a case of the Sabbath as *creation, realising, consummating and completing, “creation”.* Then, “*Because this consummation of creation in the sabbath also represents creation’s redemption – the redemption enabling it to participate in God’s manifold, eternal presence – it will also be permissible for us to understand the sabbath as the feast of redemption. But if, as the feast of creation, it is also already the feast of creation’s redemption, it is understandable that the whole of creation should have been brought into being for the sake of that redemption. The sabbath is the feast of creation’, writes Franz Rosenzweig, “but a creation which took place for the sake of redemption. It is manifested at the end of creation, and manifested as creation’s meaning and destination.”* (p.277/8)

Do these men actually believe what they are saying? Then why do they not mention the Name of Jesus Christ and glorify Him for being the

Creator and Redeemer of the Day of Victory? Why sing praises to the Sabbath Day but don’t remember the Lord of the Sabbath Day? Why acknowledge the redemption the Sabbath presupposes and derives from but not the Person of that redemption, Jesus Christ? Because it would amount to admitting and confessing the creation-Sabbath is Christ’s Day, Redemption-Day, Resurrection-Day, and ONLY as Christ’s Day, is God’s Day of Rest; ONLY as Christ’s Day, is God’s Day of blessing; ONLY as Christ’s Day, is God’s Day of sanctification; and ONLY as Christ’s Day, is God’s Day of **finishing!**

It should be thoroughly *understood* that “*the whole of creation has been brought into being for the sake of redemption*” – **not** for the sake of the Sabbath. In fact, the Sabbath, **like** *the whole of creation has been brought into being for the sake of redemption! Redemption*, and **not** the Sabbath, is “*manifested as creation’s meaning and destination*”. The Sabbath must be seen and is seen as “*also already the feast of creation’s redemption*”.

“*... the sabbath as the feast of redemption. ... as the feast of creation, it is also already the feast of creation’s redemption*” – The Sabbath sees the redemption of creation but not its Reality and Guarantee which is Jesus Christ? It is like celebrating Waterloo without acknowledging the victory of the whole war. Moltmann’s Sabbath is like esteeming and venerating the day but forgetting what it is all about – namely “*the redemption enabling (creation) to participate in God’s manifold, eternal presence*”. **That is only possible through Jesus Christ**, “God with us”. God’s Sabbath Rest witnesses to the realisation in Jesus Christ of that possibility and through Him becomes the act of *God’s manifold, eternal presence* –

Only *redemption* through the blood of Jesus Christ enables sinners “*to participate in God’s manifold, eternal presence*”. Read Hebrews 10:12, 7:19 *et al.* Jesus is the only Name and only Mediator, the one High Priest of reconciliation and atonement with God. He is the only qualification to God’s Rest. Only the *eschatological* and *messianic* redemption through Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected, is able to also *consummate the redemption of creation*. And the Sabbath Day is God’s Feast Day which has this all-encompassing and in actual fact *manifested* redemption in view and in remembrance. No doubt left; no excuses left; no enjoyment of the Christian Sabbath precluded for being Christian Day of Worship Rest.

We repeat: The creation Sabbath is Christian Sabbath – eschatological, messianic, predestined, prophetic, promised, appointed, covenanted Sabbath Day of the LORD your God, Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus Christ. Creation narrative knows no other Sabbath Day because it knows no other LORD God of the Sabbath Day. The Christian **Day** of

Worship **does** have a basis – a *theological* basis. And that basis is **not** itself or itself in the hands of man! For the **Sabbath** cannot be the basis of Christian **Faith**, but **Christian Faith** should be the basis of its Sabbath Day – like **Christian Faith** is the basis of **all** Christianity, of **all** Christian doctrine and theology, of **all** Christian belief and practice. The **basis** of the Christian **Sabbath**, is the **one** and the **same** basis of all Christian **Faith** – of the believing, of the living and of the experiencing and expression of it – **the Resurrection** from the dead of the crucified **Jesus Christ!** Christian belief of the Sabbath Day, is **not, creation**-based whether firstly or lastly – it **firstly and lastly**, is **salvation**-based, **Gospel**-based, **Christ**-based, **resurrection**-based. And its whole *'theology'*, must be comprised and constituted of and be directed towards this its origin, its essence and its very life. Any *'Sabbath talk'* should glorify God, His Christ, His salvation, and only then will it do honour to God's creation – only then will it be of *service* and *worth* (Barth) to the Body that is Christ's and to the world that must listen to this talk. Don't let us weary God and bore the world with our songs and praises to the Sabbath Day as to a useless, worthless idol! *E.g., "It was for the sake of this feast-day of the eternal God that heaven and earth were created, with everything that exists in them and lives."* (p. 277, 4<sup>th</sup> par.) What makes such idle idol talk about the Sabbath Day even worse is that we are able to shout its hallelujahs while we shun and shame its holy keeping. Show the Sabbath its God-given respect, and it will be a respect to its honour; give the Sabbath more of our own and self-improved respect and it will be to its dishonour. It is vastly a different thing to say and proclaim and to believe and keep a Sabbath Day that is *"the feast of creation ... for the sake of the redemption"*, than to say and proclaim and to believe and keep a Sabbath Day *"... for (which) sake heaven and earth were created"*. Because *"as a feast of creation it is also already the feast of creation's redemption"*. (par. 5 p, 277) *"It is understandable (then) that the whole of creation should have been brought into being for the sake of that redemption"* – the only of God's Covenant of Grace, the Christ-redemption.

It is just as understandable that also the Sabbath Day *"should have been brought into being for the sake of that redemption"* – "the Sabbath was made for man." At this point the Jesus disciple will begin to **believe** the Sabbath Day, **not just understand** it. He will begin to **keep** the Sabbath Day **because** he *understands* it, which means the believer will keep the Sabbath Day *"for the sake of"* its Lord, even **Jesus Christ!** For without Jesus Christ as *"the meaning and destination"* of the creation-Sabbath it is void of *meaning and destination*. The Sabbath Day gets filled to overflowing with its *meaning* when it holds its position – its dignified and honoured position of **service** to the worship of the Saviour-

Creator of both man and the Sabbath. The moment the Sabbath Day is not humbly submitted to its Lord, it no longer is the Lord's Day, but man's – a usurper of the glory that is Christ's, a sabbath of the justification and righteousness of the covenant of works. Be it far from the Christian man and the Christian Church – be it far from the Christian Day of Worship!

**How is such undeserved elevation and veneration of the Sabbath Day managed?** Exactly in making of the creation-Sabbath **strictly** a Sabbath of *'creation'* – something 'old covenant', 'Jewish', and 'legalistic'. But essentially by making of it *"creation"*-Sabbath firstly and lastly. By making too much of the Sabbath Day we make too little of it; by making too little of the Sabbath Day we make too much of it.

This very over-emphasising of the "creation" aspect of the Sabbath Day is typical of legalistic Sabbath movements, especially when they are so called *"unitarian"* or *"subordinationist"* – people who deny the divinity of Christ. It must be because no person less than God can be the Redeemer. Because these people worship a redeemer that is not God by nature or rank, they must also see the Sabbath Day in any possible way except as belonging to the salvation-rest of God. The result must inevitably be divination of the Sabbath Day in stead of to worship Christ. The Sabbath Day truly honoured always leads the worshipper away from strange gods and to the only God who is Creator, but who verily as Creator, is the God of mercy and redemption. And that means the Sabbath does have *"salvific worth"* – **exactly in that itself pleads not its own veneration, but its Lord's.**

The Sabbath of natural or Judaic theology verges on the same dangers. It could never be the Christian Sabbath:

*"Was und warum wird überhaupt am Schabbath gefeiert?" "What is celebrated on the Sabbath, and for what reason?" "Die Bedeutung des Sabbats ist, die Zeit zu feiern und nicht den Raum." "The importance of the Sabbath is to celebrate time, and not space."* (Abraham Heschel, *Der Sabbat – seine Bedeutung für den heutigen Menschen*, Jüdische Verlagsanstalt)

The Sabbath is supposed to help men worship the true God and not strange gods. (In fact it is its most important quality and recommendation through *"service"*.) But to *celebrate Time* is as good as to *celebrate Space* – both directed *celebrations* are idolatry! The Sabbath hasn't got the celebration of *Time* or of *Space* as its intentional meaning, or end-purpose – not even for the Jew (Heschel is Jewish). Why not? Because, says Heschel, *"Drei Taten Gottes kennzeichnen den Siebten Tag: Er ruhte, er segnete und er heiligte den Siebten Tag (1Mose 2,2)."* *"Three of God's deeds are distinctive marks of the Seventh Day: He rested, He blessed and He sanctified the Seventh Day."* Heschel should also have mentioned the most important *deed of God* – that He **finished!** Four deeds of **God!**

Four **deeds** of God that mean the **One Word** of God even Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead! “*The meaning of the Sabbath ...*” – to *celebrate the deeds of God*, is to *celebrate God, doing!* No Christian can think of God acting, doing, working to the point of blessing, sanctification, rest and completion, NOT acting, doing, working to the point of blessing, sanctification, rest and completion through, in, by and towards the Word of God, God Himself, Jesus Christ, towards the Redemption of the creation! God acting without Jesus Christ for the Christian is simply incomprehensible! And it in fact is impossible for **God**, to act otherwise than by and **as**, Jesus Christ. If the Sabbath **is** for celebrating, **has** anything to celebrate, it is much more than to celebrate *Space or Time* – in fact it is that which is described in Ephesians 1:17 to 23 and other places – it is that deed of God that surpasses all Time and Space – that surpasses all ‘creation’. The Sabbath Day has as purpose and meaning, has as purpose and meaning **of its creation**: the remembrance, celebration, honouring and worship, of God’s One **Word of Deed** in Jesus Christ – Redemption even the Redeemer! “God spoke and it was!” What great word of Scripture and worship – it is a word for the Sabbath Day and its Psalms!

“*Sechs Tage der Woche leben wir unter der Tyrannei der Dinge des Raums; am Sabbat versuchen wir uns einzustimmen auf die Heiligung der Zeit.*” “*Six days of the week we live under the tyranny of the things of Space; on the Sabbath we try to tune ourselves in on keeping time holy.*”

Thus we prolong *our life under tyranny* to the Sabbath Day – for both space and time are created and are “*things of*” creation. To “*try to tune ourselves in on keeping time holy*” is as much *life under the tyranny of the things of space* as are *the things of life* of the six ‘working’ days of the week. What could make a difference? Nothing at all! We still are the *living* and the *tuners* and *keepers*. We still are the anxious! Like all man’s endeavours, no things of space or time – not even the Sabbath Day itself – are able to provide the peace and rest the Sabbath is supposed to bring and serve! Because God is worshipped in Truth and in Spirit – which is the Sabbath’s **single** and *all-encompassing* end and *consummation*. In this its most humble and most glorious end consists the Sabbath’s only rest and peace.

The peace and rest of the Sabbath Day **happen** – it is not the Day as such. It occurs in its being created anew by God **in the worship of Him**. The peace and rest of the Sabbath Day are an event of the moment of worshipping God in the Faith of Jesus the Christ and in the fellowship of the Body which is Christ’s – **for which the Sabbath Day was created**. It stands under the Lordship of Christ who is Lord of the Sabbath Day – verily “in the beginning” itself! The Sabbath is Christian

in that its rest and peace are Christ’s. A Sabbath that offers its own peace and rest – a rest and peace of man’s doing or of creation’s doing, isn’t the Sabbath of the LORD your God. The peace and rest of the Sabbath Day **happen** – it is that only Peace and Rest of God **as of God’s of this Day and as of God’s doing of this Day**. The Sabbath’s is the peace and rest of God’s *New Creation*. It happens in worship and rest of the **Body which is Christ’s**. It cannot get old, near its passing away and vanish, because it happens and happens in God. The Body which is Christ’s is the event that creates the event of the Sabbath Day!

That makes the difference between God’s Peace and Rest on this Day the Sabbath Day and God’s peace and rest on the six ‘working days’. That also clarifies another misconception basic of Heschel’s reasoning, that the occupation the six working days offer as well as require is seen as “*the tyranny of the things of space*”. No! God’s allotting to the ‘working days’ man’s labours is no “*tyranny*” – it is what God allotted to them and therefore man’s labours also is the blessing which God bestowed on those days. Also the ‘working days’ are the creation of God and receive from God the sweetness and happiness of work and industry.

The Sabbath Day itself is **God’s own wish**. It is God’s own and free inner self-movement. The Sabbath is God’s decision! That’s where the Sabbath started from. God tied the Sabbath Day irrevocably to the revelation of his blessing, sanctification, finishing and rest. God tied the Sabbath Day irrevocably to the revelation of his Name and Grace. God tied the Sabbath Day irrevocably to the revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ. No man is able to make an end to it. No man is able to deprive the Body of God’s People of its Day of Worship-Rest. God, through the Sabbath Day provides for the Faith of Jesus his Church. God, through the Sabbath Day provides his Church ‘space’ and ‘time’ – the grace to be and of being. God, through the Sabbath Day provides his Church space and time to worship Him and in worshipping Him to find its peace and rest in Him. In the Christian era, in the Christian Faith, the Sabbath Day reaches and realises its end and goal in Christian worship – even in the completeness of the finishing of all God’s works through Jesus Christ and in Him. The Sabbath is absolutely ‘Christian’.

The Jewish faith – like the world’s faithlessness – could never taste the sweetness of the Christian Sabbath’s peace. The Sabbath Day brings the Christian under the restlessness that all the world and especially the Jews might also share in the Sabbath’s true end and aim – the peace and rest and joy and celebration of Jesus Christ the Word of God “to-us-ward”, Emmanuel, God with us, the Rest of God Creator – His Rest for man. “On the Seventh Day ... Sabbath of the LORD ... even **your** ... God”.

“Am Sabbat versuchen wir uns einzustimmen auf die Heiligung der Zeit.” “On the Sabbath we try to tune in ourselves to the sanctity of time” – which is all wrong from the Christian perspective. It should be our tuning in on the holiness of **God** and not of time! *We try to tune in ourselves to the sanctification of the **Spirit of God!** We indeed try to tune in ourselves to the sanctity of the Sabbath because it is **God’s** Sabbath Day, and of **His** deeds, of **His** rest, and of **His** holiness, the Day.*

We fall in with God, we are in feeling with His own inner sympathies, only when we are in tune and in time with the melody and rhythm of Christian Faith. We must *try to tune in ourselves* to God’s melody, rhythm and harmony when we on the Sabbath Day, with Him, and in sympathy with His Triune volition, enter into His Rest of the Seventh Day of the week. Thus we shall “in Sabbath’s-time” celebrate the redemption of creation, of life, and of time and space, as the angel on beat with earth’s percussion descended from heaven and God the great Conductor into glorious finale lifted up Jesus from the dead.

“Am diesen Tag sind wir aufgerufen, Anteil zu nehmen an dem, was ewig ist in der Zeit, uns vom Geschaffenen dem Geheimnis der Schöpfung selbst zuzuwenden, von der Welt der Schöpfung zur Schöpfung der Welt.” “On this day we are called up to partake in that which is eternal in time, to turn ourselves from the creature to the mystery of creation itself, from the world of the creation to the creation of the world.”

*On this day we are called up to partake in that which is eternal in time, to turn ourselves from the creature to the Mystery of Godliness and of creation Himself, from the world of the creation to the Creator of the world.* Christian Faith only can – because of Jesus Christ. No other faith can – because of Jesus Christ!

There is no “openness” (as Moltmann says) of creation’s creation in this perception of Heschel’s – no openness to its future of redemption; no openness to its future in the Redeemer. *We* every Sabbath Day return to the celebration of “Time”. But in going back to the creation man should find his **Maker** there – who is creation’s Maker **only** as his **Redeemer**. If man cannot thus return to creation and there find his future, it is better that he doesn’t go there at all. (For that is how all the theorising about evolution starts – man constantly returning to his beginnings, unable to see his future as his past.) Man must discover his future in his very creation according to the Christian concept of things – or have no future. The Christian who remembers the Sabbath Day to keep it holy remembers that he in his forbear Adam was driven out of God’s Rest. God swore man would not enter in again and put cherubs to protect The Place of Rest against man’s intrusion upon it. The Christian who remembers the Sabbath Day to keep it holy will see God put this day the

Seventh Day of God’s doings, apart unto His own Glory, and **between man in his sin and God in his redemption**. The Sabbath serves no other purpose, consists of no other benefit – it is there for the sake of man in his praying unto God for forgiveness of sins and the mercy to live and to live in His sight! The Glory of God’s Mercy Seat fills the sanctuary so that no man can enter in or look on and live – but the Priest and Mediator between man and God, the Man between man in his transgression and God in his judgement.

*On this day the Sabbath, we are called up to partake in God who in Christ is the Eternal – without beginning, without end, who turns us from death to the mystery of creation itself – even the Beginning of the creation of God; from the world of the creation to the creation of the world* in its very salvation and redemption through Jesus Christ. From right at the first Sabbath Day is God the Redeemer God and only with creation’s redemption in view was He Creator of it. The purpose and meaning of the Sabbath Day is to constantly teach man this the glory of God and his worship. The Sabbath after Jesus Christ has again become our tutor to Christ who shall bring us to God. There’s no use any longer for a Sabbath that brings us “*from the world of the creation back to the creation of the world*” – it must bring us to Christ in order that He may bring us to God. In fact the Sabbath never served creation for the sake of creation. The very first Scripture-word on the Sabbath Day already makes it very clear. The believer remembers his and the world’s creation for the sake of God in Christ. The Christian remembers the Sabbath Day to keep it holy for no reason than the blessing, the sanctification, the rest, the finishing – indeed for no reason than “all the works ... **of God**”. They all in **God**, in **Jesus Christ**, find their peace. That’s the Sabbath’s rest too.

“Wir (die Jüden) gedenken an den Tag des Auszugs aus Ägypten, an den Tag als Israel am Sinai stand und unsere messianische Hoffnung ist die Erwartung eines Tages, des Endes der Tage.” “We (Jews) remember the day of the exodus from Egypt, and the day when Israel stood at the foot of mount Sinai and our messianic Hope is the expectation of a day, of the end of days.”

*We* Christians remember the day of the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ, *and the day when The Elect stood at the foot of the Throne of God and our messianic Hope is the expectation of a day, of the end of days.*

*Remember the day of the exodus from Egypt, and the day when Israel stood at the foot of mount Sinai, and see the messianic Hope and Expectation of the end of days – see the Christian era, the New Creation, the Kingdom of heaven and of God. See Jesus Christ! The Sabbath lets us remember the deeds of God – “let us rejoice it, it is of the LORD’S doing; it is wonderful in our eyes”.*

What makes the difference – the difference between the (Jewish) *Sabbath of the creation* and the (Christian) Sabbath of *messianic Hope and Expectation*? Fulfilment, Truth, historicity and reality! Jesus Christ made the difference and still makes the difference – He made and still makes that difference through resurrection from the dead. The Risen Christ is the Crucified Jesus. He lives, within my heart He lives by faith and his blood cleanses me of all unrighteousness because He is risen!

That is the peace of the Lord's Sabbath Rest.

The Sabbath of the creation and its celebration might even be refined to an art. But it won't change it – it stays the work of man; it still isn't God's work of creating peace and rest. "Man kann das jüdische Ritual als die Kunst charakterisieren, der Zeit gültige Formen zu geben, als Architektur der Zeit." "It is possible to characterise the Jewish Ritual as the art to give time normative form – as an architecture of time." It doesn't make of the Jewish Sabbath the true creation-Sabbath. It contributes no ounce of worth or beauty to God's Sabbath Day that is complete and is completed in the finishing of God's own doing ... through Jesus Christ that is!

"Three of God's deeds are essential of the Seventh Day" – even four – attributes of God essentially contained not in the Seventh Day as such, but essentially contained in that which the Seventh Day derives its value and virtue and even its validity and nature from – all the deeds of God exclusively and restricted in and through Jesus Christ! Not through creation but through Jesus Christ in and as a result of His resurrection from the dead – immediately and "also already" from the day of God's Rest on "creation"-Sabbath! Moltmann's Sabbath of "creation" is no different from Heschel's Sabbath of "Time". Both "govern the Self" – "das Selbst zu beherrschen". Neither are governed by God in Christ.

Moltmann ends shall I say his introduction to his Chapter 11 (p. 278, 2<sup>nd</sup> par.),

"We shall now look at the individual elements of the sabbath as the Jewish understanding of God's revelation comprehends them, and shall then use these as a point of departure from which to work out the messianic elements of the sabbath which emerge from the Christian understanding of God's revelation. For it is from this, ultimately, that the long-neglected problem about the connection between Sunday and the sabbath arises."

Note that Moltmann speaks of "the Christian understanding of God's revelation" – not of the Sabbath! For him there is no "Christian understanding" of the Sabbath. Not even "the messianic elements" should be understood from a "Christian understanding" point of view – either of the Sabbath or of "God's revelation". For even the Jews find "messianic elements which emerge from (their) understanding of God's revelation".

Point is these "messianic elements" "emerge from the Christian understanding of God's revelation" and not from the Sabbath or from any which way the Sabbath might be understood. Now that renders Moltmann's consideration of "the individual elements of the sabbath as the Jewish understanding of God's revelation comprehends them" and his use of "these as a point of departure" quite useless information for "the Christian understanding of God's revelation" and for *the Christian understanding of the Sabbath Day*.

It is **an impossible presumption** that the problem about **the connection between Sunday and the sabbath** could arise from 'working out' the messianic elements of the sabbath which emerge from the Christian understanding of God's revelation, and the Jewish understanding of it. What has Sunday the First Day of the week got to do with the whole issue? Only the comparison of the **Old Testament** and the **Christian** understanding of God's revelation would render possible an understanding of the messianic elements of the sabbath which emerge from the Christian understanding of God's revelation. Because it will be **one** understanding and the **same** Sabbath Day.

How be it, the essential approach of Moltmann's is clear – "messianic elements emerge from the sabbath" for the first and only time here where, from the *Christian* point of view, the "connection (with **Sunday**", lurks! But as pointed out, a *problem about the connection between Sunday and the sabbath* is **irrelevant and totally arbitrary**.

The real question is whether messianic elements emerge from the sabbath as a **result of a "Christian understanding of God's revelation"** – or not? And, whether it is possible to speak of "messianic elements" if they may not actually be followed through to **Jesus Christ?**

I think that about sums up the matter with Moltmann's theology of the Sabbath Day.

The principle whereby I reach this conclusion I may illustrate with the following from Flavel (Vol. 6, p. 86f), *The Balm of the Covenant Applied*, A Sermon Preached for the Funeral of John Upton, where he quotes 2 Sam. 23:5, "... Yet He has made me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire".

The **creation** and its recording in Genesis, including that of the Sabbath Day, should be understood for being **the one and only "Covenant of Grace" – which Flavel here supposes,**

"... The principle efficient cause of this excellent passage, is: ... "The Spirit of God spoke by me, and his **Word** was 'in my tongue' ... All this is typically spoken of David ... but mystically and eminently applies

to Christ, who was to rise out of David's seed, Rom. 1:3, and to sit upon his throne, Acts 2:30. So that in this he was raised on high to an eminency of glory and dignity indeed. ... But that which was the top of David's honour, ... was this, that the Lord Jesus was to descend from him, according to the flesh, in whom all the glorious characters before given, should not only be exactly answered, but abundantly exceeded."

Now where Flavel says "... All this is typically spoken of David ...", he also remarks, "What halcyon of days shall that people see, whose lot is cast into such times and places!" He further observes on this Scripture, that David "relieves himself by the covenant God had made with him; "Yet has He made with me a covenant." He looks to Christ, "There is more in the covenant than this my house before God". ... God's covenant with me, in relation to Christ, this underprops and shores up my heart. This covenant was, without controversy, a gospel-covenant: ... For all his salvation and all his desire were in it; which could never be, except Christ had been in it, who is the salvation of all the ends of the earth. ... God made a gradual discovery of Christ from Adam, down along to the New Testament times. ... There was the sum of the gospel discovered, though in dark and typical terms and forms of expression; but if out of this covenant as obscure as it was, David fetched such strong support and consolation amidst such a heap of troubles, then the argument is good a fortiori ... the most full and perfect display of it, in all its riches and glory; enough had been said to prove it a gospel-covenant. But if any doubt should remain of that, it will be fully removed, by considering, the eximious properties and characters of the covenant, as we find them placed in the text; and they are, everlasting, ordered (and) in all things, sure. ... The meaning is, that the benefits and mercies of the covenant are durable and endless to the people of God: For Christ being the principle matter and substance of the covenant, ... Christ being the surety of it, it must needs be, a sure covenant wherein the faithfulness of God is as illustriously displayed as his bounty and wisdom are in the properties of it. ... The singular and high valuation (David) had of it when he says, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire", i.e., here I find all repaired with an infinite overplus ... It is so full and complete a covenant, that it leaves nothing to be desired out of it. O it is a full fountain! Here I repose my weary soul with full satisfaction, and feed my hungry desires with sweetest delights; so that my very soul is at rest and ease in the bosom of this blessed covenant." (Emphasis CGE)

Every word and every application here argued to God's covenant with David may be and must be argued to God's Covenant of Grace with the creation of the world, of man, and of His holy Day of Rest. The creation and its Sabbath Day are the first things "wherein the faithfulness

of God towards man in Jesus Christ, is as illustriously displayed as his bounty and wisdom are in the properties of it" – "the eximious properties and characters of the covenant, as we find them placed in the text; and they are, everlasting, ordered (and) in all things, sure" – which may be summed up as by "all the works of God", for indeed the creation is but one form or language in which God as it were cast or spoke his everlasting Covenant of Grace – Jesus Christ being the Beginning as well as the End and the Essence of it in every respect. For this reason only does Flavel find it impossible to take into consideration the "Covenant of Grace" without full well to be conscious of the Rest it contains and transfers to its beneficiaries.

Flavel finds "It is so full and complete a covenant" that "here" – in Jesus Christ – I find all repaired with an infinite overplus!" But Moltmann in contrast finds "the sabbath both veils and discloses an eternal surplus of meaning" ... except Jesus Christ.

Flavel speaks of the Rest thus, the consequent consistence of the fact Jesus Christ is the End of the "Covenant of Grace". But nevertheless if ever the creation contained the Sabbath, the Sabbath is part of God's Covenant of Grace – because the creation is God's Covenant of Grace, expressed in terms of creation. If God says of the Sabbath it is a "sign" between Him and His People, a "sign" that He is their God, then the Sabbath as the People is the covenanted object of the Covenant. And just so all the essential elements that constitute the divine Covenant of Grace are presented and actually implemented by God Himself on the very Seventh Day of the creation-week, in His creating the Sabbath Day through Jesus Christ unto Himself. And consequently, "also for the People" – for "man" in need of God's love and mercy and enabling in order to enter into God's Rest. Those elements are:

The Covenanting God, the Subject of the Covenant of Grace;  
The Covenant-sign the Sabbath Day;  
Presented and applied all the benefits and privileges stemming from the Covenant;

And the Object to the procurement of the covenanting – by completion, sealed, the Covenanted Partner, even Jesus Christ;

And by grace the principle of mediation and representation, through and in and for the sake of Jesus Christ, the People!

All "the(se) eximious properties and characters of the covenant, ... we find placed in the text" of Genesis 2!

Reference to Flavel was not unwarranted or out of place. Comparison with Flavel was not pointless or irrelevant. It shows Moltmann betrays his own dictum that "Christian Faith that is not Resurrection-Faith, is neither Christian, not Faith." Why should

Christian Faith busy itself with "the creation" and its "sabbath" if Jesus Christ cannot be seen as both the Subject and Object of its movement and direction as well as of its origin and end? For "Christianity that utterly and unreservedly is not Eschatology utterly and unreservedly has nothing to do with Christ". **Is Jesus Christ** a "Balm" and "Fountain" of Blessing and Fullness and a Sanctuary of Rest and holy Communion with God from and at the creation in the beginning of "all God's works" as He was it in the Acme of "all God's works" in the resurrection of Him from the dead – **OR NOT?!** If Yes! He was! Then the Sabbath stands vindicated the cosmic sign of it! If No! He was not! Then the Sabbath no longer stands as eschatological sign for the People of God to enter into God's Rest! Then Luther was right, and the Sermon to the Hebrew Christians should not have been enclosed in the Christian Canon of Holy Scripture. Then for nothing do the Gospels make so much ado about the Sabbath. And then for sure all the sceptical critics of the 'historic Jesus' were justified in their doubts and sound-minded in their madness of unbelief! **The Sabbath is faith's answer to God's faith in his own creation. The Sabbath sees the Day of Christ. It sees all the works of God vindicated in the resurrection of Him from the dead.** (Take away from me the Jew's Sabbath – the Sabbath of the Law and man's faithless faithfulness.)

These conclusions force the chronology and sequence of events and consequently force its history and the properties of its days. The Force these conclusions are forced by reaches to the goal and end of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ – it forces Prophecy and Promise – even the creation. (It pulls it in into itself like a 'black hole' – as I before have used the illustration.) "The fullness of time" derives from its Fountain and Creator. It does not determine God's times, but God has made man's time and man's times and days, His! As before said, "**Thus**, God finished all his works He had made". In the End (as in the Beginning) it is Christ! Not "was", or, "will be", but "is" because He who is, is always and forever – "**I AM** – the Beginning and the End of the creation of God"! (Here we find the definition of "the Lord's Day" in Revelation itself! See further on considered in its context – the context of worship and the Ecclesia!)

We are obliged eventually to return to Moltmann! So where were we last with him? Where he supplies a brief survey of his method "to work out the messianic elements of the sabbath which emerge from the Christian understanding of God's revelation" (p. 278).

Immediately one is struck by the admission that as far as "the sabbath" is concerned, "messianic elements" could only "emerge from the Christian understanding of God's revelation". It

remains an enigma why and how for Moltmann these "messianic elements" cannot emerge (from the Sabbath) as "Christian" elements? For it is from this – or rather from the **absence** of this, ultimately – that the long neglected problem about the connection between **Christian Faith** and the Sabbath arises!

We have before paid attention to the next thoughts of Moltmann's. All along the difficulty for me was Moltmann's Christ-less Christianity – how he can equalise and identify "the Creator's rest" with creation itself and strictly as "the Creator's creative activity". "**The work of creation is completed through the Creator's rest, his creative activity is completed through his blessing, and his work through his sanctification of the sabbath**". More emphatically it could not have been denied – Jesus Christ utterly and unreservedly has nothing to do with it! That is a very strange way of 'completing' Christian theology! Even after "Exodus 31.17 adds after God's rest that 'he drew a breath of relief'" – which from the nature of the case no longer can be God's "creative activity" – Moltmann insists that "That is a very strange way of 'completing' a work"! (A 'creative work' 'of creation' of course.)

So it's difficult not to be repetitive. Moltmann's strict and strained "creative activity" repeatedly confronts the Christian-orientated view of creation and its recording in the Scriptures – "by inspiration of God in fact profitable for doctrine in righteousness, for contradiction in righteousness, for correction in righteousness, for instruction in righteousness" (2Tm.3:16). Who would deny by "righteousness" Christ is meant? Moltmann tries his best not to look "biblicist" or "fundamentalist" for he would not say that in Genesis 2 by God's work to "bless" the Seventh Day, by God's will to "sanctify" the Seventh Day, by God's end in that He "finished" on the Seventh Day, by God's availing the "rest" of the Seventh Day – indeed by "all the work of God" – **Christ is meant**. "Let us rejoice in it" – in God's "making" of this Day – is it not for the sake of Jesus Christ!? "**The argument is good a fortiori**" the creation of God being "**the most full and perfect display of**" God's Covenant of Grace. Moltmann **could** not say what he should have said about the Sabbath Day because he must say it of the First Day of the week! The only reason for Moltmann's strict and strained "creative activity"-meaning of the Sabbath and of the Sabbath-Scriptures, **is Sunday**, "For it is from this, ultimately, that the long neglected problem about the connection between Sunday and the sabbath arises" – "this": That the "God who 'rests' on the sabbath recedes behind this different concept (of His being) viewed as the one who in his essential being is solely 'the creative God'". No one

illustrates it better than Moltmann with his own theology. "From this arises": the theological habit to rob the Sabbath of what by the will and revelation in Word and Deed of God belongs to it, and to bestow it upon the First Day of the week in stead.

#### 7.7.1.16.

### **"God in Creation" is God in Christ** **The Sabbath in Need of an Eschatological** **Basis and Content**

#### **Calvary – Garden of Joy Called Eden**

*"With God's sabbath of creation, his history with the world begins, and the world's history with God."* (Chapter 11, Par. 1, p. 279)

The Sabbath is God's "making" – his "creation" – and in the first place and before anything else, is **God's will**. That makes of the Sabbath Day both an eschatological reality and cosmic truth. "The Sabbath was made" not for itself but for God – according to the creation saga. And God having made the Sabbath for Himself the very first Sabbath Day in time and space would pass on the glory from God unto God. But God Himself has no glory unless in and by Jesus Christ. So God has no glory not even in and by the creation – not even in and by the Sabbath – but that glory, is Christ's – not diminished in any way but even with and in its most superior degree, the Glory of God the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. It follows the Sabbath had no glory and not for once and never would possess glory but the glory it receives from and is indebted to Christ. In this sense only could it be said, "*With God's sabbath of creation, his history with the world begins, and the world's history with God*".

God created, and, finished, the creation and all his works, through Christ unto Christ. To tell this truth and to proclaim this, God's, glory, is the Sabbath's only and whole meaning. God made the Sabbath for the **worshipping** of Him. He made the Sabbath Day for the glory of the Father as that glory only realised, accomplished and sealed in the Son by the Holy Spirit. The Sabbath means: Look o man, o heavens and earth, and see your Redeemer-Creator Jesus the Author and Finisher of the Faith! Because with Jesus *man's history with God*, and with Jesus *God's history with man*, begins and is finished. "Remember the Sabbath Day" God reminded his People ages later, that they should "keep it holy" ... "holy" unto God – for God in the showing forth and working out of his eternal resolution in Jesus Christ! Because *God did not begin his history with the world, nor the world's history with Him, with the Sabbath of creation*, but He began it with his sovereign will and covenant with the Son, through the Son and in the Son. In the Son God finds his good pleasure. And having found and having founded his good pleasure in the Son, God blessed the Day thus blessed, sanctified the Day thus sanctified,

and in the Son rested unto the finishing of all His works, "the Seventh Day".

The Sabbath is appended – always appended – because God by appointment appended it for this goal and end. If put first, the Sabbath looses its very glory God attributed to it. If Christ must serve the Sabbath we human beings make of it a curse. Creation isn't god of its Creator. But Christ being Lord of the Sabbath does serve the Sabbath as the Sovereign serves his serfs! Christ honours the Sabbath Day in making Himself Lord of the Sabbath Day. Creation is exalted in its Creator. The children of God are mightily honoured in their Father being their Father – and even more so in the Father being their Father in and through the Son! The Sabbath is honoured as long as we men boast not arrogantly our own pride but bending low worship the Christ of God and Lord of the Sabbath and of its purpose.

The very first Seventh Day in *God's history with the world and the world's history with God* clearly possessed no higher glory, no blessing more precious, no sanctity more holy than that to serve the honour of God. The Sabbath of the creation has no lustre but its Lord's shone upon it and reflected by it. But if its Lord Creator does have Glory, then the Light of His Glory actually penetrates into the Sabbath, and from inside, bursts out of it again. The Light that shines forth from the Sabbath Day is Christ's – no other's and nothing else's! The Sabbath's glory isn't the Law's glory; or the glory of some first cause; or of some mystical spirit – its glory is not of creation, but of Grace. (The Sabbath's glory least of all is credited to man's physical need for rest.)

The Sabbath's glory comes from the God who created from love and for love the reward of love – the only God whom no one shall know or see but through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ the revelation and the Revelator of the loving God. It's just consistent and consequential that this God would create the Sabbath Day for this end – love's reward of love! It's just logical – while there's nothing just logical about God's exposing Himself so to speak in Jesus Christ for the sake of his love for man and creation! It's impossible for God to risk anything. But He puts his life – the Life of his Love – as down-payment and guarantee of the attainment of his Rest and Peace and Completion. God in **redeeming it through Christ**, "finished" his creation. He sacrificed his own Life even the Man of Nazareth that is love and the surety of God's creation. Jesus is the crucified God for to bring to its end God's Eternal Purpose. God compromises in no respect – He becomes the crucified God for the sake of his honour and Name. (God is Himself the co-lateral and guarantee of His enterprise.) "It is finished" from the beginning. "In the beginning" ... "God rested the Seventh Day". What could this be but eschatology? What could this be but Christ on the cross calling "it is finished"? Then: What



could Christ's word, "**It is finished**" be but His across the abyss of death taking hold on Victory in resurrection from the dead? (The vision is Klaas Schilder's.) His word "It is finished" already is Christ's claim on the recompense for his labour. He scored the triumph and holds the trophy. **In Christ Jesus the beginning and the end meet in that in Him time is brought to its "fullness" and consists.**

If we persist in talking about the Sabbath Day strictly in the context of creation and purely as a 'creational' temporality, we blaspheme, for "Sabbath" – Rest and Fullness – is found only in God only in Christ Jesus and not in anything purely 'creational' or only temporal.

Moltmann in his *Preface to God in Creation*, stresses that his is "*a pneumatological doctrine of creation*". "*This doctrine of creation*", says he, "*takes as its starting point the indwelling divine Spirit of creation*". "*But if we understand the Creator, his creation, and the goal of that creation in a trinitarian sense, then the Creator, through his Spirit, dwells in his creation as a whole, and in every individual being, by virtue of the Spirit holding them together and keeping them in life. The inner secret of creation is the indwelling of God, just as the inner secret of the sabbath of creation is God's rest. If we ask about creation's goal and future, we ultimately arrive at the transfiguring indwelling of the triune God in his creation, which through that indwelling becomes a new heaven and a new earth, and we arrive at God's eternal sabbath in which the whole creation will find bliss. The divine secret of creation is the Shekinah, God's indwelling; and the purpose of the Shekinah is to make the whole creation the house of God.*"

(I shall further on compare this with the later Moltmann in *Das Kommen Gottes*.)

What does Paul say? "Giving thanks unto the Father ... who has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son in whom we have the redemption ... who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible ... principalities of powers: All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and by him all things consist. He is the Head of the Body, the Church – He who is the Beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, and (in fact) having made peace through the blood of his cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself. By Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col.1:12-20)

"In Him should all fullness dwell" ... through resurrection from the dead! "In fact ..." through resurrection from the dead "... having made peace through the blood of his cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself". There is no possibility and indeed no possibility of speaking of

the blood of the cross, of reconciliation or of peace, **without presupposing the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.**

Exactly by **supposing** the Holy Spirit of God Paul is able to explain the *inner secret, beginning and goal* of creation by mentioning **only** the "Father" and the "Son". Exactly by **supposing** the Holy Spirit of God Paul is able to **pre-suppose** the "Son" in the historic Christ and Christ-event. Exactly by **supposing** the Holy Spirit of God Paul is able to **pre-suppose the "Son" as the 'Indwelling God'** of creation. Paul is able to presuppose the "**Son**" as **God in creation**. Christ Himself stated the Spirit won't speak of Himself, but would witness of Him, Christ! This explains the difficulty in Moltmann's '*thinking*' "*to understand the Creator, his creation, and the goal of that creation in a trinitarian sense*". Where is the Son in the Being and "*indwelling*" of Moltmann's '*trinitarian*' "*God in creation*'"? **Where is Jesus Christ as the secret and explanation of creation?**

Moltmann presupposes an **absolute discontinuity** between what is 'creation' and what is 'Christian' as he presupposes an **absolute discontinuity** between what is 'Spirit' and what is 'Christ'. He **must**, because he attempts to explain **Sunday** with 'Christian theology' and the **Sabbath** with the "*theology of creation*" – which is impossible if it had been Christ who had been present in the creation of the Sabbath.

Throughout Moltmann's '*theology of creation*' one consistently finds missing the Second Person of the Triune Godhead, as well as His "Body the Church". For Moltmann the Spirit applies to the creation "*as a whole*" – not to the Son the Firstborn of the Elect or to the Elect Few of His Body. (Moltmann believes the salvation of all men of course as one could have told and is wont to discover in *Das Kommen Gottes*.) But had the Spirit been the "*indwelling God*" of God's **Elect**, He **in the creation**, would have been The-of-Jesus-Christ-Witnessing-Spirit. And then He would have been the Spirit of God's Rest of the **Seventh** Day of God's creating, **as well**. That would have made of the **creation** Sabbath Day the **Christian** Sabbath Day. Moltmann cannot face the consequences of such a conclusion. As it is, he through the consequences of his own theology of **creation**, is forced to admit the Sabbath is not abrogated but is binding on Christians – **but not at the expense of Sunday**, rather to the benefit of Sunday. Also not as a Christian Institution, but rather as a '*creational*' institution at best. (As explained before namely as the beginning of Sunday, re p. 296.) But had Moltmann been able to see **Christ** in the beginning and in the reason and goal of creation, then instead of to see the Sabbath merely as **creation's** goal and completion, he would have had to admit the Sabbath as **Christian** Day of Worship-Rest exclusively and at the expense of Sunday!

Concerning the Sabbath Day this (already) seems to be the conclusion one will finally be forced to reach in Moltmann's theology of *God in Creation* as a whole. (As will be seen, there is no further development of his ideas in the later *Das Kommen Gottes*.) It is because Moltmann practices two contradictory 'theologies' – the one a 'theology of creation' and its 'sabbath', and the other a 'theology' of 'the new creation' and its 'Christian sabbath'. That makes an appreciation of Moltmann's theology of the Sabbath a rather cumbersome undertaking. It does have the advantage though that every negative implication opens wide the opportunities for positive formulation and affirmation of the only Christian and Bible-Sabbath, "the Sabbath of the (only) LORD your God".

To return to Chapter 11 – No "*Sabbath: The feast of Creation*" unless it is the Christ-Feast! No "*Completion of Creation*"-Sabbath unless it is Christ its Fullness! No "*Blessing of Creation*"-Sabbath unless it is Christ its Blessedness! No "*Sanctification of Creation*"-Sabbath unless it is holy unto Christ and through Christ is holy unto God! There is **one** "*Feast of Redemption*" because it is the Feast of "*Jesus and the Sabbath*" – indeed of Jesus **in resurrection from the dead! The creation Sabbath is "*The Feast of the Beginning*", of eternal salvation and of "*The New Creation*" – it even is the Sabbath on the **New Earth!! The Sabbath: Cosmic Eschatological Sign!****

"*We have to find a Christian way to sanctify the sabbath.*" (p. 296)

I almost felt like saying, what ridiculous suggestion! If it is God who sanctifies the Sabbath Day, it is Christ who sanctifies it. (No proper Sabbath-doctrine is possible from a "Unitarian" point of view – as if Christ's relationship with the Sabbath Day merely is human. It is essential the deity of Christ be unconditional and supreme especially when human talk concerns God's Sabbath Day!) The very first Sabbath of God's creation – of the Triune God's creating – was already holy unto Him for the reason of Christ Jesus and for Christ Jesus being its Creator and Lord! Then by Word of God, God in deed – by Word of Act – sanctified the Sabbath once more. (The last has become the first.) Jesus, saying, "The Sabbath was made" implies, "Listen, I am **The God** who created the Sabbath Day, therefore, **I Am, "The Son of Man, The Lord – Lord-of-the-Sabbath-Day**" His, is the name of **God**, and his name is, **The-Name-of-God**!" The Name of God is Lord of the Sabbath Day. God, by his Word of Oath, as says Hebrews, confirms His Day of Worship Rest: in Jesus Christ! Which means the Sabbath as it were was dedicated to **Christ** for being Lord and the initial, essential and ultimate meaning, goal and fulfilment of it. The Sabbath's very first holiness exactly was its holiness unto Jesus Christ. In the very end its essential holiness would serve its Lord again in His Rest of Victory over death and every possible

and impossible negation of his divine life. The Sabbath knew no other sanctity but the sanctity and holiness upon which it had been founded and in the fullness of time again would, **once more, finally, and therefore creatively and primarily, be founded by Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead.**

The Sabbath of the Lord your God ... Is not **God's Rest** the reason the Sabbath is His? It does not speak of **another's** rest – it speaks of **God's Rest**. It does not speak of another **rest** – it speaks of the **Rest** that is God's. Does God have a rest He did not reveal to his creation but withheld from it? Or is Jesus Christ the Rest of God and the Rest He revealed and intimately made known to man as the Fountain of life from the moment man lived through grace by faith alone? Then **God's Rest is the One Who sanctified the Sabbath, is in fact the Sanctity of it and was the very reason and Blessing of its creation.**

Talk about the Sabbath "*of the creation*"? **There is no such thing!** We don't have to find a *Christian way of sanctifying the Sabbath* – we have to find the **Christian** way the Sabbath **is** sanctified and **had been** sanctified by God and by no one less than He. Let us stop playing God. Only He can sanctify the Sabbath, and even God can do so because He is able to only through Jesus Christ. Even God is unable to sanctify the Sabbath Day unless He does so as the Triune God and through Jesus Christ. Yea, in fact we find God is limited by his Self-limitation and actually so acted in the beginning as He was determined to do by his Self-revelation in Jesus Christ. **If God did so or otherwise in Jesus of Nazareth, He is thereby bound to do it the corresponding way before or after.** The creation-Sabbath is but a reflection of the Sabbath God in and through Jesus Christ "made" when as "the Son of Man" He walked this earth and rose from the dead of this earth. And if that reflection at the creation is the Seventh Day of the week, then the creation-Sabbath – from our and the eschatological point in time – reflects what the Christ-Sabbath had been and the way in which God sanctified it – which is the *Christian way*. God sanctified the Seventh Day of the week when He created heaven and earth the *Trinitarian, Christian Day of Worship-Rest*.

"*God 'hallowed' the sabbath because 'on it he rested from all his works which he had done in creation' (Gen.2,3). Here for the first time in the biblical traditions we find the word 'hallow'. To hallow or sanctify means, roughly speaking, choosing or electing, separating off for oneself, declaring something to be one's own property and inviolable. Significantly enough, the word is not applied either to a creature or to a space in creation; it is kept for a time, the seventh day. Again, one might say that the sanctification of any creature or space would be particular, whereas the sanctification of the sabbath benefits all created things on the seventh day; that is to say, it is universal.*"

The Sabbath is sanctified unto a holy purpose – the purpose of God’s rest, blessing and completion not only of all his works of creation, but of “all the works He **did**” – “*had done*”, or, “made”. God’s works aren’t limited to the worlds He had created. God’s “work” and “works” imply much more than the material “*universe*”. The Seventh Day – “remember” – is “sanctified”, “the Sabbath” – “the Day the Rest” (the literal) for the purpose of the finishing of God’s “**works**” – of his deeds or doing, or **God’s acts of being**. The Sabbath, in other words, is “sanctified” for the purpose of God’s Self. God “made” the Sabbath Day unto Himself – its “holiness” means everything but that it is “*universal*”. It is God, *choosing and electing, separating off for Himself, declaring the Seventh Day to be His own property and inviolable. Significantly enough, the word to hallow is not applied either to a creature or to a space in creation or in time; it is kept for an earthly day – this Day the Seventh the Day of God’s Rest.* Jesus also, says, “the Son of Man is Lord indeed of the Sabbath”. Jesus also – as God – claims the Sabbath Day for Himself – privatises the Seventh Day, *inviolably* His Day. Only in God does the Sabbath find the answer to its reason, the importance of its being. **The sanctity of the creation-Sabbath Day is the fact it was meant for Jesus Christ.**

Man is not mentioned in the ‘*tradition*’ of the Sabbath’s creation. (As noted several times before.) (The Sabbath was “created” – God willed and “spoke” this Seventh Day into being as He willed and “spoke” all other of his works and all the objects of his creating into being.) Man is not mentioned in the ‘*tradition*’ of the Sabbath’s creation – he thus by omission is emphatically present on the Seventh Day in the presence and in the eternal Present of God by way of being implied in God’s rest, blessing, sanctification and finishing – which emphatically again implies man’s presence by way of mercy and mediation – by way of grace and representation in and through Jesus Christ. Which emphatically again implies man’s fall and sin and sinfulness ere the Sabbath Day had started. “Therefore the Sabbath was made for man; not man for the Sabbath”! God finds his Self-interest in the interest of man. In the end – as from the start – it means Christ the reason and goal of the Sabbath Day.

“Therefore the Sabbath was made for man; not man for the Sabbath”! This word does not mean – utterly does not mean – that the Sabbath was made for man so as to show how much more excellent and glorious a being than the Sabbath he is or used to be and how inferior the Sabbath Day. It means much less that man in fact is lord of the Sabbath Day – that man rules over it and is empowered to annul it or to invest it with honour. (As he did or thought he could do with Sunday and as it is argued by Sunday-protagonists.) On the contrary, this word of Christ reveals man’s plight and need of grace. Man’s lowly worth and status

while in this need, is the Sabbath’s most excellent glory and boast: **For it is the Sabbath’s worth in service.** The Sabbath was made for the good of man in his need and plight. The Sabbath created by God for his own Rest in Jesus Christ is the Sabbath created by God for man’s salvation rest in Jesus Christ. Where does Christ’s glory shine most brilliantly? From the cross! Where the Sabbath’s? From man’s need of grace! From the cross the glory of Christ’s resurrection shines forth; from the resurrection the glory of the Sabbath’s creation shines forth – even the glory of Jesus’ dying for the sin of man. “It is the Day the LORD has made!”

*“The human beings who rest on the sabbath day, and who in their rest are wholly present, are God’s image.”* Yes, it is true – but only in *The Human Being in whom* they rest on the sabbath day, and **in whom** they in their rest are wholly present, who is God’s **own** image – even Jesus the Son of Man and Son of God, Servant of the LORD and Lord indeed of the Sabbath Day. The Event makes the Day; not the day the event – from the glory of God’s doing in Jesus Christ everything of God’s creation finds its peace and rest and joy and glory.

The Sabbath is servant of all and everyone – of all and everyone within the *fellowship* of the Elect of God. The Sabbath means nothing ‘*universally*’. God *declared it to be His own* – it benefits the creation as such only because it benefits the Elect of God. (Before discussed.)

Asks Bacchiocchi, much in the same strain as Moltmann, “**THE SABBATH: CREATIONAL OR CEREMONIAL?**”

And answers himself,

*“The function of a tool or machine is largely determined by its original design. An automobile designed for carrying passengers is soon demolished if used to transport building materials. What is true for man-made tools or machines is also true for divine institutions. Their functions are determined by God’s original design in instituting them.*

*To understand the meaning and function of the Lord’s Supper, for example, we go back to the Last Supper and study how Jesus instituted this ordinance and what function He intended it to fulfil for the Christian Church. What is true for the Lord’s Supper is also true for the Sabbath. To understand its meaning and function for the human family, we need to study how and why God instituted it at the completion of His creation. Surprisingly, the matter-of-fact creation origin of the Sabbath, which is repeated several times in the Pentateuch (Gen 2:1-2; Ex 20:11; Ex 31:17) and is acknowledged in the New Testament (Mark 2:27; Heb 4:4), has often been rejected in Jewish and Christian history. In recent years, the creation origin of the Sabbath has been challenged by both critical minded scholars and conservative Christians.*

*Critical scholars have conjectured that the Sabbath derives from factors such as the veneration of the planet Saturn, the four phases of the moon, the need for a market day to buy or sell produce, the seven-day periods of ancient Mesopotamia, and the symbolic importance attached to the number seven by many ancient Near Eastern people.*

*Conservative Christians have attacked the Sabbath by denying its creation-origin and reducing it to a Mosaic institution given exclusively to the Jews. Christ allegedly fulfilled the Sabbath by replacing the literal observance of the day with the offer of His rest of salvation. By rejecting the creation origin of the Sabbath these Christians attach a negative, "Jewish" stigma to seventh-day Sabbathkeeping, identifying it with the Jewish dispensation allegedly based on salvation through legal obedience. Sundaykeeping, on the other hand, has been associated with the Christian dispensation based on salvation by grace through faith. Thus, Sabbathkeeping historically has been perceived as a trademark of Judaism. Within Christianity itself, those Christians who have retained seventh-day Sabbathkeeping have been stigmatized as Judaizers, holding onto an outdated Jewish superstition."*

Much the same as Moltmann. Only clearly from another culture. But neither are essentially 'Christian'. Bacchiocchi speaks of "*the meaning and function of the Lord's Supper ... for the Christian Church.*" "*What is true for the Lord's Supper is also true for the Sabbath*", says he. What Moltmann calls the Sabbath's "*universal*" benefits, Bacchiocchi calls the Sabbath's *function and meaning* for "*the human family*". The Sabbath's sanctity doesn't (like the Lord's Supper) mean it is for "*the Church*" specifically. "*The creation origin of the Sabbath ... is acknowledged in the New Testament*". Merely. Its *creation origin* for Bacchiocchi is not **based** in the New Testament. Its real *origin* does not consist in Christ. "*God ... (merely) instituted it at the completion of His creation.*" The Sabbath's is made a diluted *Pentateuchal institutional meaning and function*.

And so we could go on. A "*negative, "Jewish" stigma to seventh-day Sabbathkeeping, identifying it with the Jewish dispensation allegedly based on salvation through legal obedience*" **will always dangerously remain justified**. Not because the Sabbath itself has the properties that could evoke such misconceptions about it, or because the Gospel implies such contradiction with the Old Testament. But because the Sabbath must eventually go over into the hands of man for whom it was made. This is the point – man's "keeping" of it – where the problems with the Sabbath begin. And this is the party – its beneficiary, man – with whom the problems with the Sabbath begin. The stigma is unfortunate but **well-earned** because the "*seventh-day Sabbath-keeping*" of man got identified, with "*it*", the **Sabbath of God**. Man's "*seventh-day Sabbath-*

*keeping*" and seventh-day Sabbath-doctrine in fact in no respect differ from that of "*the Jewish dispensation*" and just as totally are "*based on salvation through legal obedience*". Unfortunate; but true nevertheless. But every reason for the stigma will be found in the human 'keeping' and in the human doctrine – none of it in the Sabbath of the Bible that from the nature of the case is without fault being "the Sabbath of the LORD your God". And those reasons we talk of for finding fault with the Sabbath Day don't come from the Jews, but are to be found among Christians and had been begun by Christians – Christians who still keep the Sabbath **because** they are under the law. They have no Gospel-reason, no Gospel motivation, no Gospel purpose with or for their "Sabbath-keeping" and Sabbath doctrine. Which as a consequence is a righteousness of one's own and a justification by works.

But Christians who still keep the Sabbath **because** they are freed by Christ **from the bondage** which the law brings all men under **till they be freed from that bondage by Christ**, have every Gospel-reason, every Gospel motivation, every Gospel purpose for to celebrate and live Christ's freedom bestowed, Christ's end fulfilled and Christ's joy vibrating, through "*Sabbathkeeping*". (*Freedom and joy* says Karl Barth are God's experience of the Sabbath and Seventh Day). Freedom, joy and peace – all the gift of Jesus Christ, all identified with Jesus Christ – make up God's "rest" of the Sabbath and Seventh Day of the creation. *God's original design and determination*, His *institution* of the Sabbath the Seventh Day and its *functions*, all indicate the single origin and end of it – the glory through worship of its Lord, even Jesus Christ the Glory of God.

It should first be asked, **in what sense and to what extent** is "**THE SABBATH: CREATIONAL?**", before it could be asked, Is the Sabbath *creational* **OR CEREMONIAL?** The Sabbath is not 'creational' without saying or in the first place. The Sabbath the Seventh Day of the creation first of all and in the first and last analysis, is **EVANGELICAL!** Only after that, and only while depending on its Gospel-meaning, is the Sabbath 'creational'. Only in the third place to the order of importance and meaningfulness is the Sabbath '*ceremonial*'. For the Sabbath is ceremonial, no doubt. But its *ceremonial*-ness is no reason that it not also and more importantly is '*creational*' and, first of all, is evangelical!

Vastly different concepts connect the Seventh Day Sabbath's Genesis-introduction into the sphere of God's revelation in human history and distinguish it **from the creation** as **Gospel-matter**. Purely as information about the creation, the mention of the Sabbath in the Genesis story is totally out of place, totally irrelevant, totally contradictory. What goes before as well as what follows the Sabbath-story in the book of Genesis, strictly pertains the creation and its history. But here in between

appears a history of God and his self-reciprocal deeds – deeds that have no bearing on the creation despite it being said “Thus God finished all his works He had created” ... unless these words and these deeds of God with reference to his creation are uttered and done with reference to their affirmation and vindication in the face of their contradiction and threat – unless these words and these deeds of God speak of his love for his creation through grace. The Sabbath Day is the Lord’s Day and of love’s victory in God’s Covenant of Grace! This is the Sabbath of the Genesis story. It is a promise of something even better – the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Or it stands misplaced, irrelevant, empty and vain within its context.

The Sabbath Day is of double nature: Obviously it isn’t “matter” properly although its “Seventh-Day-ness” answers to created bodies, cosmic movements and spatial time. But the Sabbath’s “Seventh-Day-ness” also – and primarily – originates from, depends on, and is continued in God’s volition and in the **Divine appropriation** of its “*creational*” and eschatological constitution. (Christ’s Nature is One of Divine and human Being. The Sabbath’s is a reflection of it –cosmic eschatological sign.) The Sabbath witnesses of and points to Grace in Itself – to God in Jesus Christ! In this the Sabbath becomes grace in creation, becomes grace as creation and becomes creation as grace. Divine Grace supplies the Sabbath Day with eschatological meaning. The Sabbath is a sign of the Gospel – of which there is but one, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Sabbath Day is the place and point in time to which is anchored the cable of FAITH that reaches from the creation forth to the completion of all God’s works in His raising of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Sabbath Day is the place and point in time to which is anchored the cable of LOVE that from the completion of all God’s works in His raising of Jesus Christ from the dead reaches back to the creation.

In the context of Genesis 1 and 2 the Sabbath, as it is absolutely distinguished from God, also is absolutely distinguished from the creation and from its creation. It is distinguished: “The Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God”. The Day of Yahweh it is. He determines the nature of the Seventh Day – it is not the creation’s child. It isn’t said, The Sabbath of the creation, or, the Day of the Creation! As such then – as the Day of Yahweh or as the Lord’s Day – the Sabbath can only be correctly understood in a “Trinitarian” way and Jesus Christ consequently be the Lord of the Sabbath Day in the day of the revelation of God. God in his Trinitarian Being means God – revealed in grace in and through Jesus Christ.

While the Sabbath has been created by God for God and while it has been God who blesses it and while it is He to whom the Sabbath witnesses, its perpetual weekly return through all human and earthly history is made sure. The Sabbath’s constitution and nature being that of dependence on **God’s** doing and mercies, finally determines it as this different and Seventh Day – Day of God’s Giving, Love, Grace and Joy, of God’s Worship-Rest, of God’s Worship-“Blessing”, of God’s Worship-“Sanctification”, and of God’s Worship-“Finishing”. It all shows Christ. The Sabbath is eschatological.

Thus the believing Jew of old would have understood this Old Testament story of God’s history with man and of man’s history with God. In the Divine anointing of the Sabbath the believing Jew would see The Coming Anointed of God. The believing Jew of old would have read this passage of God’s benevolence with the eye on His Covenant Commitment and Promise of Faithfulness to man – to man in his need and plight of being a sinner! Or the Jew of old would not have been a Jew at heart! More than any other passage in the Scriptures would the believing Jew have understood this passage thus. And thus the whole Israel of God – they who are the children of Abraham through faith – will understand and appreciate the Genesis story of the Sabbath Day. “The Sabbath was made for man”! That can mean but one thing, that the Sabbath has Christ in sight.

To seek and find Christ in the Sabbath-passage of Genesis is exegetically sound. It is as exegetically sound as to seek and find Christ in Isaiah 53 or in Daniel 8. And if for some that is not permissible “scientifically”, then the conversation stops right here.

For the Sabbath is Day of Supplication and Prayer – its peace is founded upon dependence on God in Jesus Christ. The Sabbath’s giving is what it has received from God through Jesus Christ. Christ rules the Sabbath – He is Lord of it. He accommodates the Sabbath Day and the Sabbath Day accommodates His worship and praises. Never had the Sabbath been not the Lord Jesus’ Day and never had the Lord’s Day not been the Sabbath of which Day Christ is Lord – never! Never “in the beginning”, and never, “in the fullness of time”. *The Sabbath – Cosmic Eschatological Sign!* It is God’s Day of Worship-Rest first and last.

The Sixth Day of the creation points to a creation of God completed and fully revealed – “it was good”, and “it was very good”. So for what reason not the continuation of the creation in God’s satisfaction of the Sixth Day and in the celebration of it on the Sixth Day? Because although “very good”, the creation yet was **not perfect** nor able to continue in itself another day! “Adam would not abide one night”! God after the Sixth Day of His creating wasn’t satisfied yet. His satisfaction was not at rest yet – His satisfaction wasn’t satisfied yet. Where and in

whom could God Triune be satisfied fully but in Himself through Jesus Christ?

**The Genesis story does not record creation was perfect!** Even sinless is not perfect. Sinless is a negative concept. It cannot be a “completed” principle. The creation from its creation – as much as it stood in need of the Word of God for its creation out of nothing – stood in need of Grace for Perfection. “And God on the Seventh Day did rest”, says Hebrews 4:5. The Genesis story records that on the Seventh Day God “finished”! The “finished” state of God’s creation as of “all His works”, would not be found in nor would be founded upon the creation, but **in God in the revelation of Himself**. The “finished” state of God’s creation would be found in and be founded upon His “blessing”, His “sanctification”, His “rest”, and His “completion” of the Seventh Day.

This God did “on the Seventh Day” **historically** – He did not do it before the cosmic “Seventh Day” of “all His works”. God finished in Grace through Grace by Grace, arriving in his Rest in Jesus Christ: On the Seventh Day of His creation – **historically!**

The vastly different Gospel-language and Gospel-concepts are discovered in the story of the Sabbath the Seventh Day of the creation. None of these words and concepts with bearing on the Sabbath the Seventh Day of the creation apply to the creation otherwise. These vastly different Gospel-language and Gospel-ideas must apply to something apart from the creation and its creating – it must apply to its very Creator. It applies to creation’s only Future, the Future it started with. God is the Sabbath’s Surety and End – indeed its Saviour. God does not desert the works of His hands but attends to it in and through Jesus Christ in the blessing, sanctification, rest and finishing of the Seventh Day of His creating revelation. Or I should have said it the other way round: God does not desert the works of His hands but in and through the blessing, sanctification, rest and finishing of the Seventh Day of His creating revelation, **attends to Jesus Christ**. It means this creation story about the Seventh Day and God’s Sabbath-Rest, is prophetic – or is eschatology: It sees Christ! God creates the Seventh Day the Sabbath Day for no other reason, through no other motivation, with no other purpose in mind. God means Christ in Whom He attends to man! Jesus Christ is God’s Promise, His eternal Covenant of Grace – the Seventh Day the Sabbath of the LORD your God which He sanctified and blessed the sign to this Proprietor and to this purpose. Only with Christ in mind could it be agreed with Jürgen Moltmann (e.g. p. 288) that the Sabbath Day “*crowns the completed works*”. Only in this sense could what he says be subscribed, “*The sabbath of God’s creation already contains in itself the redemptive mystery of God’s indwelling in his creation, although – and just because – he is wholly concentrated in himself and rests in himself.*”

(p. 280) Unfortunately Moltmann obviously does not perceive of God “*wholly concentrated in himself*” as here revealing Himself in Jesus Christ. But for God “*wholly concentrated in himself*” means He is revealing Himself through Jesus Christ for that is the only way God is.

In simple language, Moltmann’s arguments amount to this: Where creation proper stops with the Sixth Day, Moltmann stops it with the Seventh Day; where Genesis 2 places Christ in the Seventh Day, Moltmann – arbitrarily – places Him in the First Day.

There is no Sabbath of God the Seventh Day of the creation “week” had no Jesus Christ been in –and, **on!** – this Day. ‘History’ and ‘Faith’ are inseparable; so are ‘chronology’ and ‘eschatology’. Faith busies itself not with itself as object of its own whims, but Faith takes hold on its only and real Object – God in Christ Jesus. The reality of Faith might be questioned, but never the reality of the Object of the Faith. And never the reality of God’s works. Christ is present and acting **on** this day, the Seventh Day and Sabbath of the LORD your God – the God of the history of the creation of the world. It is the God who is God in action. It is the God who is God in action in and through Jesus Christ. It is this God through the Holy Spirit revealing himself to man in mercy thus. This is the history of the Seventh Day of God’s Sabbath Rest.

There is no Genesis Scripture of a Sabbath Day the Seventh Day of God’s creation is Christ Jesus not its Author and Finisher. Null and void is God’s Promise, null and void God’s creation, null and void His Covenanted Peace and Rest – everything null and void – had not “God in Christ”, “finished”! Null and void it all had Jesus Christ not been raised from the dead! So “God on the Seventh Day finished”, the Bible says; “in Sabbath’s-time”, it says, again, once for all.

If the Gospel is already present in this day the Sabbath of the creation, it implies the Law also is already present. Now the presence of the Law is effective in its application purely – which implies “the Sabbath was made for man” because of man’s fall and sin and need of grace the forgiveness of sins. Only now after it has been established the Law is also present in the Sabbath Day **because the Gospel is found there**, is it possible to ask: “**THE SABBATH: CREATIONAL OR CEREMONIAL?**”

The question nevertheless is wrong. What would it help to proving the Sabbath is **Christian** if it could be proven it is *creational* and not *ceremonial*? If it could be understood the Sabbath was intended or *designed for the sake of creation* – what would it mean to Christianity and Christian Faith? Just what the ceremonial institutions do which is nothing – **unless it is Christ** we find in them all.

To begin with, who is the Creator of the “*Sabbath creational*”? “The LORD your God”? Who then, “in the beginning was”? Who then,

“in the beginning was God”? Who then, “was with God” – when in the beginning He of one more day the Seventh Day, “made the Sabbath”? Only by first asking this question and by finding its answer, could a start be made to finding *God's original design* with the Sabbath and with its *institution* (ages later on). Find its Maker and Lord, and one has found the Sabbath's reason and importance of being. Find Him and no further word or argument possible is needed to show and prove the “*creational*” Sabbath's exclusive, and, **Christian** meaning!

*“The function of a tool or machine is largely determined by its original design. An automobile designed for carrying passengers is soon demolished if used to transport building materials.”* Therefore: If the creation-Sabbath be not of *original design meant for the Christian Faith* it is soon demolished if used to transport just that Christian Faith! Christian Faith shall demolish it! Or the Sabbath originally and of *original design*, was created for the Christian Faith! For Christian Faith completes the Rest that is God's –and completes it in Jesus Christ!

**Hence**, the Sabbath Day of the LORD your God – its *design* as well as its *origin*. **For this purpose** the Sabbath Day of the LORD your God! **This is its use – the Rest which is God's!**

**Another** day dare take the Sabbath's place? Arrogant, laughable! Yea, dangerous – God shall revenge his “Holy”! God today says remove from before my face your strange gods! The Sabbath indicates worship of the only true God while Sunday always has indicated the worship of “no-gods”.

*What is true for man-made tools or machines is also true for religious institutions. Their functions are determined by their original design in instituting them. Their functions are determined by their Creator. Creator is Originator, Designer and Institutor. Creator actually is Determinator and Continuer – who, if Christ, made the Sabbath in essence, Christian; in meaning, Christian; and in function, Christian.*

Was the pre-existent Jesus Christ Lord of the Sabbath Day, the God who in its creation, “made the Sabbath”? Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and tomorrow the Same? Then “it is the Day the LORD has made – let us rejoice in it”. Was the pre-existent Jesus Christ Lord of the Sabbath Day, the God who “of the Seventh Day thus spoke: God on the Seventh Day from all his works rested”? Then “it is the Day the LORD has made”! Then “let us rejoice in it”! For “Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised”!

From the creation God made the Seventh Day for to be worshipped **“through Jesus Christ our Lord”**.

*“To understand the meaning and function of the Lord's Supper, for example, we go back to the Last Supper and study how Jesus instituted*

*this ordinance and what function He intended it to fulfil for the Christian Church.”*

*What is true for the Lord's Supper is also true for the Sabbath. When we go back to the Sabbath and study how Jesus instituted this ordinance and what function He intended it to fulfil for the Christian Church – then, we start to get a grip on the Sabbath's Christian meaning – even the Sabbath's and not the First Day's – its **creational meaning for Christian faith!***

It is a Gospel-meaning indeed we discover there and **therefore a resurrection** meaning we discover there *when we study* it and nothing else! For, “*Christian Faith that is not resurrection faith is neither Christian, nor faith*”. (Moltmann) For, “*Christianity that totally and unreservedly is not eschatology totally and unreservedly has nothing to do with Christ!*” (Barth)

O how tiresome theology's one string whining one key hammering like an unholy child with no taste or talent for music! Where is the harmonic, the melodic, the symphonic and completed metre and cadence of “all the works of God” in the “*study*” of the Sabbath?

*“To understand its meaning and function for the human family, we need to study how and why God instituted it at the completion of His creation.”*

*“For the human family”?* O no! For the family of Christ – for his Church and “Body that is Christ's”! “Let no one judge you with regard to your Sabbath-keeping”, Paul in Colossians 2:15 dares all “powers of the universe” – *tas archas kai tas eksousias = stoiceia tou kosmou*, 2:8. For Christ has made you Freeman of Christ. The Sabbath is sign of God's Elect, sign of the *Ecclesia* – not of any “principality” be it the “principality” of “*the human family*” or “world”. See Col.2:8 where “men” and “world” are used synonymously, and where both are used as the opposites of Christ. Christ's rule is also implied a *stoiceia*. See Gl.4:2, “children (“men”, the “world”) in bondage under the elements of the world” – cf. Hb.5:12. See Ro.4:12 where *stoiceoh* is used as equivalent for “that faith of our father Abraham”. See verse 20 of Col. 2 where the “living (cf. 1Php.3:16, “walk” / “rule”; Gl.5:25, 6:16) in the world” resembles the “rudiments of the world”. The Sabbath is not meant “*for the human family*” but for the family of Christ. It is cosmic eschatological sign of the cosmic eschatological sign the Church. Particularism and not Universalism is of the Sabbath's essence.

*“At the completion of his creation”, “... God instituted the Sabbath”*. Was it not at Sinai that God instituted the Sabbath, that is, embodied it in Law? Or did God institute the Sabbath at creation? **Or was it in his Eternal Council?** If in God's Eternal Council, then God had eternally determined and still eternally determines the Sabbath Day –

then He eternally had enclosed it in The Covenant of Grace. Then also did God in creating it, determine and does He still eternally determine the Sabbath Day – then He eternally had enclosed it in The Covenant of Grace. And then also when He commanded his people the Sabbath Day for to keep it holy unto his own worship, did God determine and does He still eternally determine the Sabbath Day – then He eternally had enclosed it in The Covenant of Grace.

*“Conservative Christians have attacked the Sabbath by denying its creation-origin and reducing it to a Mosaic institution given exclusively to the Jews.”* But Sabbatarian Christians – what have they (we) done? Have they – or we – entertained a flawless concept, doctrine and appreciation of the Sabbath? Far from it! Actually they – we – have *attacked the Sabbath by denying its Christ-origin* as well as Christ-future by *reducing it to a “creational” institution exclusively*. Making of the Sabbath a *“creational” institution* just as effectively reduces it to a letter of the Law as would the *“reducing of it to a Mosaic institution given exclusively to the Jews”*.

Moltmann is one *“conservative Christian”* (or should he be classed as a *“critical scholar”*?) who does not attack the Sabbath directly but much better succeeds in making it void. He does not *“deny”* or *“reject”* the Sabbath’s *“creation-origin”*. Although Moltmann *“identifies the Sabbath) with the Jewish dispensation”*, he does not *“attach a negative, “Jewish” stigma to seventh-day Sabbathkeeping”* or to the Seventh Day Sabbath as such. Nevertheless Moltmann certainly *“reduc(es) the Sabbath) to a Mosaic institution ... given exclusively to the Jews”*. And he certainly *“base(s) it on salvation through legal obedience”*. Moltmann does so while precisely maintaining the Sabbath’s *“creation-origin”*!

Moltmann – like Bacchiocchi – supplies illustration of the unavoidable consequence, that if the Sabbath loses its eschatological and therefore Christian nature and meaning, it effectively and in fact loses its *“creation-origin”* and *‘creational meaning’*. These two theologians are confirming examples of the inevitability of this consequence considering they are not of the same confessional allegiance.

Bacchiocchi’s observation, *“Sundaykeeping, on the other hand, has been associated with the Christian dispensation based on salvation by grace through faith”*, obviously is correct as is his unmentioned supposition that this *‘association’* has always been unjustified and unwarranted.

Moltmann does not find an *‘origin’* or *‘basis’ for the Sabbath in Redemption!* The arrow of the Sabbath’s pointing hits target, but short of the redemption. Then while Prof. John Webster of La Sierra University tries to defend the Sabbath with the help of Jürgen Moltmann’s *“theology of creation”* (rather than with *“chronology”*), he also fails in his defence

of the Sabbath because he is unable to discover the eschatology – the Christian eschatology – of the Sabbath Day, whether of the Sabbath of the creation or of the Sabbath of the Law.

Not only as the Sabbath of the creation, but also as the Sabbath of the Law – also as *“Institutional”* Sabbath – the Sabbath of the creation without a Christian eschatological basis and content, is void. *“With God’s sabbath of creation, his history with the world begins, and the world’s history with God”* because the Sabbath has this Christian eschatological basis and content. In this connection I might refer to something very rare indeed – an honest attempt by a “Law”-orientated Sabbatarian at a reasonably eschatological appreciation of the Sabbath. It is unthinkable to get it better, keeping in mind the author’s approach. Where this attempt shows its shortfalls it is obvious why: It cannot really answer to expectation because the consequences of a Christ-centred eschatological appraisal of the Sabbath demands the full consequence – which is to reach eschatological finality, which in the case of a Christological eschatology must be the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The author is one David Hill, and the attempt a *Sermon*, titled, *The Sabbath and the Gospel*, delivered before a *Friends of the Sabbath Conference* in Brisbane, Australia 6 April 1997. Hill introduces his *sermon* with the most natural challenge that faces a “Law”-based theology of the Sabbath,

*“We are sometimes torn between our desire to preach the gospel to those outside the church (Sic.) and our desire to see our fellow brethren come to the knowledge of the Sabbath.”*

(Hill isn’t of the opinion only Sabbath-keepers make up the Church – he calls Sunday-keepers *“our fellow brethren”*. Sunday-keepers likewise has no right to regard Sabbath-keepers as *“those outside the church”*.)

*“We “Sabbath-keepers” don’t seem to be able to mix the two together too well and sometimes we concentrate on one to the detriment of the other. My topic today is “the Sabbath and the Gospel”. I know that some of you may be thinking that the two are quite unrelated. ... However, today I want to show you that the Sabbath and the Gospel are more closely linked than what you may perhaps thought.”*

Indeed to some Christian Sabbath-keepers – they more often than not being total strangers to the Gospel and perfect representatives of the Laodcean condition of the Church which is one of complete contentment through dreary spiritual poverty – the Gospel did come as surprising “Good News”. But when the Gospel does awaken them, these Sabbath-keepers confusedly by instinct will still grapple for a hold on the Gospel by the Law. Honest and good people these Sabbath-keepers, but to be



pitted – not because of the Sabbath Day which they believe, but because of the way they believe the Sabbath Day!

“... For our purpose today I want to make a distinction between the seventh day of creation and the Sabbath. If you look through a concordance you will find that the word Sabbath doesn't get a mention until Exodus 16:23.”

Which is not fully true, because the Genesis Scripture does imply the Seventh Day as Day of God's Sabbath-Day-Rest. God's act of “rest” – as every other “act” there mentioned – is His creative act – His act through which the Seventh Day is “made” the Sabbath Day. In fact the Sabbath came into being here in the creation where God of the Seventh Day “thus speaking” (Hb.4:4), “made” (Mk.27:2) the Sabbath Day, and not only aeons later on where this Sabbath of the LORD your God was instituted in Law. So, if you look through a **Hebrew concordance** you will find that the **basic** word Sabbath does in fact get mentioned **before** Exodus 16:23 – and that right here in the story of the creation.

But Hill's observation about the fact that – in the translation – the word “Sabbath” isn't found before Exodus 16 is quite significant and goes to show that **the essence** of the creation-story is what is basic, conditional and constitutive of the Sabbath Day and its Institution so long after in the form of the Law – that the Law is secondary and not the primary thing. It is this “created” quality that carried the Sabbath through to its Institutional introduction. It proves the point the Sabbath-story of the Seventh Day of the creation is proleptic, prophetic and eschatological. It points to the Sabbath's Divine or “Godly” origin, purpose and meaning, discovered prospectively in God in Christ. Divine or “Godly” means the Sabbath's creation-origin is “Christian”, “Christological” or “Christ-centred” – God being the Triune God revealed and *immediated* in Jesus of Nazareth. Christ then is acquainted to the Elect individually and personally through the Holy Spirit. So the Sabbath as “made” and made known in the life of the Divine Son of Man in the form and nature of earthly man, is the Sabbath as willed, created and instituted by God “according to the Scriptures” and by reason “according to the Scriptures” – even by reason of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“... I want us to study the Seventh Day and the Sabbath separately then at the end ... we may be able to come to some conclusion ... So Adam and Eve ... knew the consequences of sin. “The wages of sin is death”. Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God ... So (Adam) said, ... I was afraid ... I was naked ... I hid myself. ... And (the Lord) said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten ...?”

Hill unprovoked presupposes Adam's sinning and sinful nature before he can discuss the Sabbath Day! And he (unwittingly?) recalls the

garden of Eden events as the natural sequence of man's creation on the Sixth Day! Which sequence – naturally – preceded the very Seventh Day's history! The story of Eden is the story of man's fall and estrangement – not of his sinless though temporary attainment.

“I want to point out three things that happened as a result of having broken that law.”

When could that law have been broken? When should its breaking have occurred in view of the meaning which the Sabbath discloses within that history? Hill perhaps not realising it tells when – it was before the Sabbath started and ere the first day of man's creation had gone through. (How we fit in all the many events of the Sixth Day within the space of a single day is not for me or for anyone to explain because that would be to expect the impossible from a finite mind. (“Actuality is not the sum total of being.”) The creation-story is metaphor, and creation – even “God Himself” – “can only come to speech metaphorically”. Eberhard Jüngel. The Sixth Day's logic, necessity and “factuality” remain though for reaching a consistent conclusion to events of history. “They knew the consequences of sin”, says Hill.

Why would Adam be afraid? How could he have discovered his nakedness? Why would he hide? Because: the reason given: because “they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the late of day, and they hid themselves from the Presence-of-the-LORD His Name: The-LORD-Calling-to-man-Saying-to-man”. It is Jesus Christ, asking man, “Have you eaten of the tree?” Man fears and hides and shames because of the Presence of the LORD and a Tree called the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil – because of the tree in Calvary's garden.

What happened on the Tree in Calvary's Garden?

“I want to point out three things that happened as a result of having broken that Law: Firstly: The curse of death was active – “Dying thou dost die”. Secondly: The sweet fellowship between mankind and his Creator was shattered. Thirdly: God pronounced that living means hard work.”

No less! This was Christ reckoned for us:

“... Those three things describe the condition of mankind ... under the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:10 NKV) ... for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

Separated from their heavenly Father (Isa.59:2 NKJV) “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.”

Unable to find rest or peace. A state of restlessness.

So in rebellion and sin we become the object of a curse, separated from God, and without rest.”

It is a Sabbath’s scene. And Christ its Subject.

Then what happened “in the Sabbath”?

“But in the Seventh Day we see three opposites:

The object of blessing, separation to God, and rest.

So we see in the Seventh Day the grace of God. God’s provision of mercy....”

We see in Jesus Christ risen from the dead *three opposites: blessing, separation to God, and rest – opposites to the curse of the Law, Separation from the heavenly Father, and unrest and anxiety.*

“If one could but join oneself to the day in some way”, sighs Hill. If one rather could but be joined to Christ in resurrection from the dead! Then as a matter of course would follow the joining to the day for here appears in the world of the lost, the People of God by the Power of the Holy Spirit of Christ.

“Up to this point we have been discussing the Seventh Day”, says Hill. Concentrating on the Seventh Day has brought into focus and clear perception the Sabbath of the LORD your God and what it means ... for a Christian – what it means in Christ through resurrection from the dead!

Hill has left out the most important: “Finishing” – “ending”!

Because of God’s finishing of all He had created and everything in it and all the works of God seen and unseen, known and unknowable, past and future, in heaven and on earth – God introduces this “the Seventh Day” for the “finishing” of his “blessing”; for the “finishing” of his “sanctification”, for the “finishing” of his “rest”. As Eberhard Jüngel has said, “For Christian faith we only speak of God if at the time we speak of a fundamental difference between God and the world.” In the Seventh Day of the creation this *difference* is anticipated as well as present.

“Actuality is not the sum total of being.” “The language of faith proclaims the existence of a new creation”. In this Scripture on the creation of the Sabbath Day is active “the process of metaphorical prediction articulating the emergence of a radically new possibility – rather than the extension of present actuality”. (J. B. Webster explaining Jüngel, *Theological Essays* – of course not in this context but nevertheless the useful language of Christian Faith.)

For Moltmann though, “*creation*” is “*creation*” and “*the Sabbath of creation*” is “*the Sabbath of creation*”. He finds it impossible to be articulated in Christian language – in the language of Christian faith! Despite his evolutionistic tendencies and anti-fundamentalism and anti-Biblicism, Moltmann is a “creationist” extremist. So are most Sabbatarian dogmaticians.

It is dangerous to talk about the Sabbath Day. In Hebrews 4 it says – in the context of talk about the Sabbath Day – that the Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword that divides the marrow from the bone.

David Hill: “Now let us focus on our attention on the day called the Sabbath day that God gave to Israel ... (Exo 20:8-11 NKJV) – the Sabbath of the Law. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (9) ... Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

Here is the well known Sabbath commandment which cements the relationship between the seventh day of creation and the Sabbath. There can be no denying that the command to rest draws its authority from the example of God’s seventh day rest. ... By sharing in the divinely appointed day we share in the blessing of it. The last sentence tells us that because God made the earth in six days and rested the seventh day of creation, the Sabbath – that is, every Seventh Day – is blessed and what is more it has been declared a sanctified day, that is, a day set apart for holy use! No wonder that the two terms are often used synonymously.

The Bible gives three reasons for Sabbath keeping: BLESSING (Isa 56:2 NKJV) “Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.”

SANCTIFICATION (Ex 31:13) “Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: Surely my Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you.”

REST AND REFRESHMENT (Ex 23:12) “Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

What does the Law teach? The Gospel – the Gospel and its work of God’s finishing! It teaches God in Christ acting if it teaches blessing, sanctification, rest, and new creation because that is God, finishing – finishing all his works through and in Jesus Christ.

What is the Sabbath else but for the worship of the Creator-Redeemer of his very particular People the Elect Saved? Talk about the Sabbath means talk about salvation. Talk about creation means talk about eternity. (Or at least it ought to.)

Thus in the two initial revelations of the Sabbath Day – the creation and the Law – is initiated Christian eschatology, the eschatology of grace and the Covenant of Grace.

It ends not there.

Writes the Seventh Day Baptist theologian of the nineteenth century, A. H. Lewis, (Emphasis CGE)

“George Adam Smith comments on the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah in a most illuminating way. After describing **the anti-ceremonial and highly ethical nature of the prophet’s message**, he concludes his treatment of the chapter in the following manner: ‘And so concludes a passage which fills the earliest, if not the highest, place in the glorious succession of Scriptures of **Practical Love**, to which belong the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, the twenty-fifth of Matthew and the thirteenth of First Corinthians. Its lesson is ... that no mere forms of religion, however divinely prescribed or conscientiously observed, can of themselves lift the distraught and trailing affections of man to the light and peace of Heaven; but that our fellow-men, if we cling to them with love and with arms of help, are ever the strongest props by which we may rise to God; that character grows rich and life joyful, not by the **performance of ordinances** with the cold conscience of duty, but by **acts of service** with the warm heart of love.

And yet such a prophecy concludes with an exhortation to the observance of one religious form, and places the keeping of the Sabbath on a level with the practice of love . . . . Observe that our prophet bases his plea for Sabbath-keeping, and his assurance that it must lead to prosperity, not on its physical, moral, or social benefits, but simply upon its **acknowledgement of God**. Not only is the Sabbath to be honoured because it is the ‘Holy of Jehovah’ and ‘Honourable’, but making it one’s pleasure is equivalent to ‘finding one’s pleasure in Him’. . . . The prophet, then, enforces the Sabbath simply on account of its religious and **God-ward aspect** . . . . Now, in that wholesale **destruction of religious forms**, which took place at the overthrow of Jerusalem, there was only one institution which was not necessarily involved. The Sabbath did not fall with the Temple and the Altar: the Sabbath was **independent of all locality**; (It dispenses of possibility and openness.) the Sabbath was possible even in exile. It was the one solemn, public, and frequently regular form in which the nation could turn to God, glorify Him, and enjoy Him. Perhaps, too, through the Babylonian fashion of solemnising the seventh day, our prophet realised again the primitive institution of the Sabbath, and was reminded that ... the Sabbath is, so to speak, sanctioned by the statutes of **Creation**.

Among the lessons of the Babylonian captivity was the lesson of better Sabbath observance. As Professor Briggs well says: “They are exhorted to be faithful to the Sabbath, the holy day of Jehovah. All other holy things have been destroyed. All the more is their fidelity to be shown by the sanctification of the holy day. In response to such repentance **Jehovah will come. His glory will be revealed, and his light will shine, and dispel their darkness and gloom. He will guide them continually, and satisfy all their needs, so that they will become like a well-watered**

garden; and the wastes of Zion which have been long desolate will be rebuilt.”

**The prophets approached the Gospel standard of righteousness, and taught and lived a religion which brought men into a vital relationship with God. They had no interest in matters of mere form and ceremony. Religion as they conceived and taught it must issue in right conduct. Again and again these prophets of old who **could not tolerate a formal religion** called their people back from the apostasy of Sabbath-breaking. They exalted the Sabbath, and assured the people that peace and prosperity would follow a wholehearted return to the observance of God’s holy day.**”

Thus in the third and **prophetic** revelation of the Sabbath Day also, one finds sustained a Christian eschatology – the eschatology of grace and the Covenant of Grace. Through the Sabbath man is confronted, “once again(with) the fact of the existence of (his) fellow men – (with) the ethical problem – by which (he) is brought face to face with the great disturbance” of grace. (Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 14:1-15, p. 505.)

In the Sabbath is hidden the unrest of rest and the rest of unrest. The Sabbath offers no occasion to fall asleep, but sounds alarm and calls up to war. It is the day of the Child-King’s coronation and of the usurper harlot’s dethronement. In the Old Testament economy the Sabbath is the only day the trumpet was heard. It still in the New Testament economy is the only day. The trumpet of Proclamation awakens the drowsy to his own incompleteness and want of rest and peace. The Sabbath isn’t there for the self-contentment of the protected and salvaged specie of an ecological wonder or an Edenic social system. The Sabbath brings man face to face with the crisis of eternity – with the judgement: the judgement of God. Love is God’s merciless Judge. No one escapes punishment who is judged by Love because Love finds no one not guilty. The Sabbath’s task and role is to allow the prisoner audience with the only Advocate and Mediator between man and God, between creation and Mercy.

But comes Moltmann, and the Sabbath’s eschatological significance is reduced to an eschatology minus its Christological essentiality – which leaves an inessential Sabbath and a lamed and futureless eschatology.

“His works express God’s will, but the sabbath manifests his being.” (p. 280)

For the works of God do sing the praises of God – Psalm 19! But the Sabbath Day expresses God’s will! It sings the praises of the predestined dispensation of God in receiving from Him what is indiscernible in created things, but is discernible in the uncreated future.

The six days' creation had been finished and God had pronounced his satisfaction with it. God's satisfaction of the Seventh Day already belongs to a future work and to a future finishing of His. The creation-Sabbath's ineffable blessedness, sanctity, rest and completion belonged to the future – it originated and derived from God in his revelation of Covenanted Grace. All creation of God through creation were invested with temporality – all future pending God's redemption. And the Sabbath Day was the indicator to that future. The Sabbath holds the Promise of Jesus Christ who manifests God's Being. Jesus Christ is *The Blessing of Creation* as well as of the Sabbath Day. God *rested not from all His works which He had done "in creation"*! (Par. 2, p. 281)

*"Blessing is always something extra – something added to creation."* God rests in something that is not creation. The Sabbath is a cosmic day – another created entity to exist as such next to the other days of God's creation. God rests "on, the Seventh (created) Day", but not "in" it, or, because of it. God rests in or because of his Self-Satisfaction – which is his own Image and which no created thing can be. God finds his rest in His Rest which is outside the created things and which He brings to the created things – not, as the blessing in its own right of the *added* or *extra* Seventh Day – but as Himself in His own Presence as Jesus Christ. God's Rest of the creation Sabbath Day tells of Jesus Christ or it is mute creation ... which, perhaps, it should be. By virtue of God's true rest then, it might be said that the Sabbath as God's *work expresses God's will, but Jesus Christ manifests his being.*

Now God finding his rest in His Rest is God working as never before or after! **Now God is God to the full!** God finding his rest in His Rest is the moving of the Prime Mover, the causing by the First Cause, the power of the Almighty. It is God in absolute action – which is not to create, but to redeem creation! It is God in the Covenanting of His Grace. It is God in Christ Jesus.

God by his own will and volition accepts to rest "on the Seventh Day". In the incarnation in the first born of Mary the Son of God "emptied Himself" and made Himself lower than the angels and lowest of men. God chose to become man's Servant. He accepted for himself man's nature and life-form of organic dependency on created things. Thus here from the beginning of the creation of God, God chose and accepted the world, the life and the time which He created for man, for Himself! This is **how God is God to the full!** He chose and accepted to find and to found His Rest in human time and nature: "on the Seventh Day". Who would still insist Jesus would not rise from the dead Christ and Lord on the Sabbath Day, but instead on the First Day? Who would insist Jesus Christ would not be God to the full in resurrection from the dead of man's world in God's New Creation "in fullness of Sabbath's time being-in-the-

light"? "*The God who rests in his glory*", "on the Seventh Day", is "*God present in the Sabbath*". (p. 280) But it is not God in "*stillness*", but God in the *glory* of his *rest* of the Sabbath Day – which is the sounding of the resurrection of life from the dead!

*"God's eternal glory becomes present ... in his rest"* – neither with reservation nor "*exoterically*", but in the Elect of his grace. Every holy Sabbath of the LORD your God resounds with the proclamation through all creation of God's finishing and perfecting in the life of the Resurrected Crucified of Golgotha. On the Sabbath Day the incarnation of God is completed and through it the completion of man's creation.

For the Christian the Sabbath's rest means: "Let us rejoice in it" – not be quiet in it! God's Sabbath Rest is not one of *stillness* – not for the initiated few – but for the Rest of the completion of all God's works in Christ. "All the hosts of God", rejoice! Moltmann is totally wrong in saying, "*God blesses (the sabbath), not through his activity, but through his repose*". We have said it before, and say it again – a God whose rest means he *reposes* or stops working, stops to be God. God is God acting. And He is God acting like inwardly like outwardly. There is no contradiction in God (no dichotomy, no enigma). Neither is there contradiction in his works. The God whose actions we see in creation is the God whose actions we see in redemption. God revealed is Truth. It is God in Jesus Christ! God who in the pinnacle of his works rests on the Seventh Day, is the God who in the pinnacle of his rest, works on the Sabbath Day. So is God, God through Jesus Christ. The God who would stop redeeming, would in fact stop being God – would never have been Creator. God through Jesus Christ, is Lord and God of the creation!

Creation is more than its actuality: It not only witnesses to the possibility, but to the exigency of God and that the redeeming God. The Sabbath is the vantage point from where man may look for this Redeemer Creator. No, the Sabbath is bottom of the depths to where God reaches for man. Now, death, where is your sting? For "this Jesus", "who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world", and "whom you have crucified", "God raised from the dead". "For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might **bring us to God being put to death** in the flesh. **But: quickened** by the Spirit ... **(He) doth now save** us the spirits in prison by the resurrection of Christ who is ascended into heaven on the right hand of God ...". (Peter – I believe his idea at least, on Pentecost and by letter.)

The first Sabbath of creation was no different – yes, no different from the vantage point of the Sabbath Day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ "**from amongst the dead**". God who in love calls man's name ("O God, why hast thou forsaken me?") is God visiting him in death ("Adam, where are you?") – is God redeeming him from death ("It is finished!").

Moltmann in Chapter 11 of *God in Creation* treats the Sabbath under four headings: “*The Feast of Creation*”; “*The Completion of Creation*”; “*The Blessing of Creation*”, and, “*The Sanctification of Creation*”. Obtrusively absent is the fourth factor of distinction of the creation-Sabbath – God’s fourth and essentially first act of the Seventh Day of his creating – namely that of His “finishing”, “completing” or “perfecting”.

One doesn’t need to guess why Moltmann leaves this aspect of the creation-history of the Seventh Day vacant – he unmistakably reserves it for the First Day of the week! “*The Feast of Creation*” is a possibility only as a feast of beginnings. “*The Feast of Redemption*” though is a possibility only as feast of completion and perfection. For the same and only reason Moltmann cannot allow the Sabbath of Creation any soteriological meaning – that is, any eschatological content and essence. He doesn’t see – and of course doesn’t try to see – Christ in the Sabbath and in its meaning and potential. Least of all could Moltmann see Christ in his resurrection from the dead in the Sabbath Day. Is it because Moltmann disposes of a better method or principle of hermeneutics? Is it because he isn’t ‘fundamentalist’ or ‘biblicist’?

“*If we combine the two – the sabbath as the completion of creation and the sabbath as the revelation of God’s reposing existence in his creation – then these two elements point beyond the sabbath itself to a future in which God’s creation and his revelation will be one.*” Moltmann has the Sunday in mind. His whole argument steers in its direction. He presupposes that God could get no further than “*creation*” by and on the Sabbath Day of the Seventh Day of His creating. God by the Sabbath Day could get no further than createdness and the actuality of createdness. God could get no further than “*the sabbath*”, either “*as the completion of creation*”, or “*as the revelation of (His) reposing existence in his creation*”. Exactly like the Seventh Day Adventists, Moltmann denies the Sabbath all “*symbolic*” meaning; all prophetic potential; all metaphoric possibility; all eschatological essence and content. “Sabbath” of the “Seventh Day” is of “creation” – literally, ‘fundamentalistically’, ‘biblicistically’. Moltmann’s “*sabbath of creation*” is void; it is dead. For life “*beyond*”, one should also go “*beyond the sabbath itself*”. In the Sabbath itself, there exists no “*future in which God’s creation and his revelation will be one*”. Only the First Day has been endowed with that possibility. No one knows since when or by what pre-emptive. No one can explain why the possibility, promise and pre-emptive belonging to the Seventh Day “concerning (which) God thus spoke”, must go to the First Day of the week?

By all logic – to mention but the weakest of arguments (Only Jesus Christ Himself as “argument” is strong.) – *if we combine the two – the*

*sabbath as the completion of creation and the sabbath as the revelation of God’s reposing existence in his creation – then these two elements point TO the sabbath itself* – in fact to a future when in Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead *God’s creation and his revelation will be one!* No accident is it that Matthew in so many and precise words confirms, “... in Sabbath’s time”. “*God’s reposing existence*” only found realisation and expression in “the exceeding greatness of His Power” – in its exceeding greatness “**to us-ward**”! It was “the exceeding greatness of **God’s** Power **to us-ward**” ... “on the Seventh Day”, and therefore, “for man” ... “in Sabbath’s time”.

As before mentioned, the creation’s “finishing” had taken place already on the Sixth Day. Every day of the creation is indicated by an act of God. And these acts together are summarised in 2:1, “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” – passive voice and the created things its subject. (Linguistically at least and essentially metaphorically.)

“But” (in the KJV, “And”), in contrast, ““But on the Seventh Day, God ended, His, work, which He, had made”. Here is the active voice – God the subject and the Seventh Day and all creation together its object. “God ended” – **all** His works – in a threefold manner: 1. “He rested”; 2, He “blessed”, and, 3, He “sanctified”. These, God’s acts, are directly and inseparably related to “the Seventh Day”: God “rested on the Sabbath Day”; He “blessed the Sabbath Day”, and, He “sanctified it”. This God did through, by and in that – or “because that IN IT” as the KJV says – God (the Seventh Day) had rested from all his work which He (had) created and made”. More emphatic and clearer no words or no ideas could express the **distinction** about God’s creation **of the Seventh and of no other Day**. “God of the Seventh Day thus Spoke (It – God’s Act of Speaking – is the Name of Christ!): And God on the Seventh Day did Rest. (It – God’s Act of Resting – is the Name Christ again!)

In the first place this distinction is perceived of and is expressed as the act of God and that, of God only, as He is, which is God, **fully** God – the **Triune** God.

In the second place, this distinction as perceived of and as expressed as the Truth about God’s creation, is God in **Truth**, which is God **revealed** in and through Act – is God as the **Person of Jesus Christ**.

And thirdly, the distinction about God’s creation of the Seventh Day is perceived of and is expressed as God’s “ending” or “finishing”: Through, 1, Rest, while Jesus Christ is God’s Rest; through, 2, “blessing”, while Jesus Christ is the Blessed of God; through, 3, “sanctification”, while Jesus Christ is God’s Holy One.

Jesus Christ! For none of these distinctions come from God’s creation as “*the creation*”. Truth exists only in God Himself – and when

mercifully made known. If then there is any Truth in the creation or in the Seventh Day of the creation, any reality, any prospect, expectancy or possibility, Christ – distinctly – is there. If there is any Truth in the history of reality of the resurrection from the dead and Christ is not there, there is no Resurrection ... only “old wives’ tales”. Creation itself must be questioned before Christ in the creation could be questioned – so the Sabbath Day of the creation – itself must be questioned before Christ in it could be questioned. It would be a senseless waste of words in the story of the creation were Christ not the eschatological Promise, Truth and Content of God’s one deed and revelation of and on the Seventh Day of the creation.

When the creation story relates God’s history of the Seventh Day of the creation it speaks of and concerns the cosmic eschatological reality of God’s eternal Covenant of Grace. It speaks of and concerns the Christian Sabbath Day – the one “*Feast of the Beginning*”. The Seventh Day – unlike the cosmic creation of God which, when considered by itself, still is something, still is reality and actuality – by itself is not something, is not reality, is not actuality. The Seventh Day only because of God Revealed – only because of God in Christ, revealed in Act of Grace and Love – is Sabbath of the LORD your God, is *Feast of the Beginning*! To call Sunday by the Feast of this Divine Sabbath-Rest – God’s own “*Feast of the Beginning*” – is blasphemous and the denial of the creation’s Promise and Prophecy. (Ps. 19)

“*The roots of the Christian feast-day reach back*” to this, to the Pathos of God’s own “*Feast of the Beginning*” where His Love and Mercy are first introduced and revealed in the history of his creation and of man. It reaches back “*to the earliest days of Christianity*” – to PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY and the Church in the wilderness: “For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them” – “them”: all men in Adam under the sign of the Cross of Jesus Christ and his Resurrection from the dead.

*The roots of the Christian feast-day* thus really reach FORWARD. *The Christian Feast-Day* virtually is fetched and hauled in into God’s Tabernacling amongst men. The Sabbath “*originated*” where and when “God is worshipped in Spirit and in Truth”. Neither here, nor there, neither in Palestine nor “*in Syria*”; neither “*according to the Jewish way of counting*”, nor when “*the curious phrase ‘the eighth day’ was used for the first time*”. No! “*The significance of the Christian feast-day is to be found in the celebration of Christ’s resurrection*”! God celebrated Christ’s resurrection already the first Seventh Day of his creating the creation. That’s where and when the “*the Christian Feast-Day originated*”. “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath Day”! That is to speak the Plain Truth, its breadth and width, not neglecting its vertical

dimension: Jesus Christ in his suffering and death ... unto resurrection from the dead.

Moltmann admits and accepts that “*H Riesenfeld and W. Rordorf have shown that it was not until the second century that the remembrance of Christ’s resurrection on this day was given as reason for the Sunday celebration*”. Which is significant. It shows the Sunday’s infamous intrusion into the Christian Faith, for its claim on “*the remembrance of Christ’s resurrection on this day*” is categorically false and a daylight robbery of the Sabbath of its New Testament meaning. *The beginnings of the true Christian feast day are obscure in no respect*. Its revelation is surest sign of its authenticity. A day that originates in the obscurity of pagan idolatry never could emerge into the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. If in Christ Jesus and his resurrection from the dead there is any revelation of God or of his will or mercy, there is a revelation and an explanation, a discovery being made, of the Christian Feast Day of Worship-Rest – which is yet the Sabbath of the LORD your God, even of Jesus Christ the Lord of the Resurrection-Sabbath Day – and thus considered and remembered by the Apostolic Church – which never dreamt of Sunday in this regard or any other.

The Sunday must be made such an issue of for it still is what it originally had been – idolatry to which the Church of Christ is wholly subjected. And the Sabbath Day must be made such an issue of because it still is the Sabbath of our jealous God and Saviour, even of the Son of Man, Lord indeed of the Sabbath Day. God cannot vow his allegiance only to dishonour it. God honours his Word of Promise in Faithfulness and Love even though it may only “concern” a day – Hb.4:4. Even by the truth of the “Day concerned” is the Faithfulness of God’s Love enhanced, augmented, honoured and gloried.

The assumption that “*it is generally accepted today that the original significance of the Christian feast-day is to be found in the celebration of Christ’s resurrection*” cannot be sustained. Only the fact “*that – as Riesenfeld and Rordorf ‘have shown’ – it was not until the second century that the remembrance of Christ’s resurrection on this day was given as reason for the Sunday celebration*” can be sustained. The time of Sunday’s intrusion into the Christian Faith was manifested well enough during the second century, but **not the assertion of its basis** in the Christian Faith. The assumption is, that “*the remembrance of Christ’s resurrection on this day was given as reason for the Sunday celebration*”. What is wrong with it? It takes for granted what cannot be substantiated, and what could never qualify for the purpose it is assumed for. Without any right to do so it claims “*Christ’s resurrection on this day*”! Truth is though, that Sunday never could and never would suit the event of Christ’s resurrection because it never had been prepared thereto.

Sunday had not been created for the event for which the Sabbath had been created and promised and prepared. Truth is that the fact is, that Jesus would rise and did rise from the dead “in Sabbath’s time”, “according to the Scriptures” since the creation and the “finishing” of “**all** God’s works”, “on the Seventh Day” and according to the Scriptures since the “rest” of God, “on the Seventh Day”. Then confirmed in history in its very fulfilment “according to the Scriptures”, “on the Seventh Day” – after that He had been in the claws of death since the afternoon before the night in which Joseph of Arimathea obtained his body for entombment **the next day** “according to the Scriptures” and “according to the custom of the Jews to bury” **on Passover Feast days**. The first century Christians never recognised these **familiarities** for pertaining to the First Day of the week. They thoroughly though recognised the **Paschal** events and the **Sabbath’s** Paschal significance – **because it only was natural**. They were Jews cultured in the **Old** Testament Scriptures. The first century Christians entertained no “*remembrance of Christ’s resurrection on this day ... the Sunday*”. It is a fallacy. They remembered Christ’s resurrection on the **Sabbath** Day – **which is plainly seen** in their weekly celebration of the Sabbath Day **for the reason of their Redemption and of the worship of their Redeemer!** It is **plainly seen in their concentration on the Sabbath Day in their own Scriptures the New Testament Gospels**.

“*As reason for the Sunday celebration*” **Justin** is the first to record the battle between the no-gods of darkness and light and the overcoming of the no-god chaos – on the which day, according to Justin Martyr, “Christ **also** rose from the dead” – by which comparison he reckons Christ with the first principles of the world and puts Caesar on a par with Christ. Justin Martyr uses amulets of word of the light-god who fought the darkness-god and prevailed on the First Day of creation. Says he, Christians keep the Sun’s Day. Jesus becomes Jupiter and his cross the Tau; God the Father, Bacchus. And Anti-Christ worships idols and images and calls them by the Name of Jesus Christ! “*There are many other ways*” and “*other Christs*”. It happens when the Christ of Christian Worship is de-historicised and vaporised into man’s own “faith”. Not only the corpses of mythological gods, but smelly religious intrigue and compromise spoil the origin of Sunday Christian worship. Since the day of Justin till *today*.

Really, “*The beginnings of the Christian feast-day (Sunday) are obscure*”. Dark and black the sun covers its face in shame of man’s arbitrary veneration of it.

Now hear! “*It (Sunday celebration) does not go back to the Jewish sabbath or as the Christian way of observing the fourth commandment.*” How relieving to know! Moltmann admits this and insists on it – quite

correctly. (So do I!) Because it could not – it is impossible. If *Sunday celebration did go back to the Jewish Sabbath or the Christian way of observing the fourth commandment*, then, Sunday might have had some basis – some virtue – to be the Christian Day of worship. Then, it would have had some evangelical or Gospel-roots. But by admitting that the Christian Sunday “*does not go back to the Jewish sabbath or as the Christian way of observing the fourth commandment*”, its heathen and wanton beginnings are admitted and confirmed. By this I have not in mind the bare fact of the Sunday’s heathen and **pagan** history of, during and even before the Christian era. I have in mind its **Christian** origin – its gradual introduction into Christian worship – obscurely since the first century and openly since the second century. I have in mind its wanton and heathen origin. Justin only represents possibly many others in this. When I refer to Justin these and possibly many others are implied. Christianity itself and *en masse* degraded. “**We all**”, says Justin, “congregate on the day called the Sun’s day”. Christianity just again proved man’s natural and total depravity. No sooner had he been saved than would he deny his salvation. That was Sunday’s origin in Christian worship. Perhaps not consciously, probably not consciously, but nevertheless.

“*It (Sunday celebration) does not go back to the Jewish sabbath or as the Christian way of observing the fourth commandment. Nor can we assume that the Christian Church simply took over the pagan Sunday and provided it with a different content. This would in any case only have been conceivable as a late adaptation in the Roman empire.*”

Such a “*late adaptation*” would have been **inconceivable** because if Christianity under the conditions of severest persecution could have reached such a *late* stage in history while being a **Sabbath-keeping** community, nothing under more peaceful conditions of being a recognised and accepted religion could have caused a reverse in its fixed course of being a Sabbath-keeping religion. Such a “*late adaptation*” would have been inconceivable especially “*in the Roman empire*” for the very reason that “*in the Roman empire*” Sunday had been the holy and preferred venerated day of the emperor and empire since first Christian contact with it. That is obvious from the fact that the first time we hear of Sunday celebration – in the second century – it is employed in apology to the emperor and already is being universally celebrated by Christians in that context. It simply must be accepted “*that the Christian Church simply took over the pagan Sunday and provided it with a different content*”. The only thing questionable is whether it happened “*simply*” – that is, spontaneously and at no cost to Christianity. The only thing questionable is whether *the Christian Church* could have provided Sunday with a “*different*” and **Christian** “*content*”? Or did the opposite

happen? Had not the Christian Church with the Sunday, *taken over* its *pagan content*? It certainly did, and till today has sacredly protected, defended and nursed that *pagan content* like an inland beehive to its own destruction nurses the stranger Cape bee-queen. To its own detriment the Church's every attempt at defence or *celebration* of the Sunday happens at the expense of the Sabbath and profanation of the Scriptures.

*"None the less, the beginnings (of Sunday celebration) must be found among Jewish Christians."* Among whom else but *Jewish Christians* because all Christians were *Jewish Christians*. So on what basis then *"must"* *"the beginnings (of Sunday celebration) be found among Jewish Christians"*? *Sunday celebration among Jewish Christians*? Silly!

Silly especially when considering that *"We may assume with Riesenfeld that Jewish Christians continued to observe the law, including the sabbath commandment, even after their conversion"*.

*"We may also assume that, after celebrating the sabbath of their own people, they gathered together in their own homes as a special community as a special Christian community"*, says Moltmann with reference to Acts 20:7 as if it meant Christians celebrated Saturday evenings in commemoration of Jesus' resurrection. Now that would be even sillier than his above arguments, for if Jesus had been resurrected on Sunday morning, why would the Christians in *celebration* of it have done so on the evenings of the Saturday before?

Yes, *we may also assume that, after celebrating the sabbath of their own people, the first Christians gathered together in their own homes as a special Christian community*. But that by no means allows for the supposed **special time** of **Sunday** worship. If it had been the custom for the first believers to have *gathered together in their own homes after celebrating the Sabbath of their own people*, it logically would have resulted in worship on the afternoons of the **Sabbath** Day after the morning services had been attended in temple or synagogue. In Acts 2 to 4 the first meetings of Christianity were the morning as well as the afternoon services – **both in the temple** and later on in the Synagogues as well. In the Gospels we hear of very early morning attendance for hearing the Gospel. Evening congregations – for example as can be inferred from the instance of the multiplying of the fishes and loaves and Jesus' habit to early leave the temple and city for his nightly repose – were not customary at all.

Moltmann further does no more than to repeat the well known arguments supposedly based on Acts 20:7. Everything he presents for the sake of *Sunday celebration* is pure contriving. But see Part One of Part Three of *LD, Pentecost*. Then Moltmann – as Rordorf – exceeds himself in presumptuous claims of Christian Sunday worship. *"The next morning*

*(Sunday morning) Christians met together for the celebration of baptism and, according to Rordorf, the phrase 'the eighth day' points to this as well."* *"The phrase 'the eighth day'"* without ado is taken for gospel – is alleged for Scripture – while it nowhere appears or applies. (See about the expression "the eighth day" later on where I am in conversation with Prof. P.F. Theron. See also *Die Sondag-Waarheid*.)

But what follows as being *"supposed"*, surpasses all previous nonsense *"supposed"*: *"Whatever opinions may be about this historical reconstruction, it assumes that there was a close connection between the celebration of the Jewish sabbath and the Christian feast day, without the one feast supplanting the other."* I give up commenting on such utter senseless innovation.

Moltmann is busy telling us about the **supposed** *origin* and *Christian* legitimacy of 'Sunday celebration'. *"We (cannot) assume that the Christian church simply took over the pagan Sunday and provided it with a different content. This would in any case only have been conceivable as a late adaptation in the Roman empire."*

Moltmann consequently discovers *"Sunday celebration"* *"in the early church"*:

*"The separation of the Christian feast from Israel's sabbath"*, says Moltmann, *"also has a considerable history"* (*"in the early church"*) – which he ascribes to *"Stephen and the 'Seven' – the so-called Hellenists"*. Indeed, according to Moltmann, their *"part"* was *"an important part in this history"*. But *"in this history"* and *"conflict"* does not exist the remotest suggestion, reference, or involvement of the Sunday – **or of the Sabbath** for that matter! Moltmann has to choose his words carefully, and the *"important part"* *"the Hellenists"* had in the *"considerable history"*, had been *"played"* only **"probably"**. Not for sure, but *probably!* How *important* a *part* then could the Sunday have played *"in this history"* if even *the Hellenists' part* was only *probable*? **Was there ever such a history?** By this NONEXISTENT 'history', and *"only"* by it, *can* the *"obscure ... beginnings of the Christian feast-day"* *"be reconstructed"*? *"As a result"* of this NONEXISTENT 'history', *"the Christian feast-day parted company from Israel's sabbath, BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT Christian feast-day."* How's that for the sure foundations of Christian Faith!

In between these *probabilities* and uncertainties of pure surmising Moltmann forcibly wedges *"the conflict about the law into the early church"*. There never had been a conflict in the early Church about the Law other than in the context of the conflict about salvation by grace alone through faith. But even were there a conflict about the Law in the early Church in that it concerned the Sabbath Day, it never concerned, implied or involved the Sabbath versus the Sunday. Obviously and



prominently the early Church in fact had been interested by the Sabbath-question in the light of the Law and the Gospel – it is the only explanation for the Gospels' virtual pre-occupation with the Sabbath Day. Which shows and proves if ever anything had been provable **what the Sabbath meant** for the early Christian Faith, "the faith of Jesus" – which is the Resurrection Faith! They had to get the Sabbath in line with the *important part* it most certainly *played* in THIS Faith.

*"Their (the Hellenists') prophecy that the temple would be destroyed and their demand for freedom from the law (Acts 6 and 7, especially 6:14) first brought the conflict about the law into the early church. After the council of the apostles (Acts 15, cf. also Gal.4:8-10; Col.2:16ff.), if Gentiles wished to become Christians, they were not subject to the law and did not have to be circumcised, so they did not have to keep the sabbath either. Their position with regard to the law now came to be increasingly influenced and overlaid by Gentile Christian freedom from the law."*

*"Especially 6:14"*, says Moltmann. Fine then, let us hear by the mouth of "false witnesses", "stirred up" and "set up" (verses 12 and 13), against Stephen, "that this man doesn't stop speaking blasphemous words against the law, because we heard ourselves what he had said, that Jesus would destroy this holy place and would change the customs which Moses gave us". The witnesses were the liars and Stephen and Jesus spoke the truth. And everything they said came true. So what so "*special*" about it pertains the Sabbath or the Sunday? Jesus in fact even did change the Sabbath Day. That's no lie, but the truth! But did He change it to or into the Sunday? What was Moltmann's own testimony? *"It (Sunday celebration) does not go back to the Jewish sabbath or as the Christian way of observing the fourth commandment."* So what's the use of calling Stephen's witness? Stephen's witness can only confirm that Jesus presented Himself as the Sabbath's absolute importance, meaning, application, virtue, fulfilment – call it, every possible essential of it! But Moltmann insists it meant the curse and death of the evil thing the Sabbath Day while at the same time the creation and introduction of this sublime innocent 'Christian' thing the First Day of the week ("First Day" also by virtue of the Law). Moltmann here of course contradicts himself where he (a little further on) insists the Sabbath had not been abrogated.

Moltmann and anybody under the sun can struggle as they like but they'll never get away from under the Law for the Law is valid over man for as long as he lives. To escape from the Law in order to escape from the Sabbath only drives one into the claws of the Law in the likeness of the First Day again. The only peace pact with the Law is Jesus Christ. And if He is the Provision under the Law for man, then He is the Provision under the Law that is His – of which He is the Giver (As James

says) – God's Law as given in the Scriptures in many ways and forms and appearances but primarily as given in the Son of God. There's no contradiction in God Himself; there's no contradiction between any expression of His Will and Word in His Law, and His Will and Word as revealed through Jesus Christ. Jesus only is the perfection of it to such perfection that it is the end of it. The Christian who has freedom from the Law is enslaved to Jesus Christ. He is led beside still waters. He who is not in shackles to Jesus Christ is in shackles to the Law – he is dragged to the scaffold, guilty of sin and deserving of death.

So there's no sense in arguing about the Law either *pro* or *contra* the Sabbath. The Christian in fact neither keeps the Sabbath by reason of the Law or because the Law demands it, nor does he keep the Law by reason of the Sabbath or because the Sabbath demands it. No. Jesus is the first moving cause and last resting end of the Christian for keeping the Sabbath Day. For a Christian there can be no *parting of ways* of the *Law's Sabbath* and the *Christian feast day*. In Christ it is one. Both meanings make up the Sabbath Day of the Gospels: the *Christian feast day* as the *Law's Sabbath*, and the *Law's feast day* as the *Christian Sabbath*.

*"As more and more Gentile Christian congregations came into existence and celebrated" Sunday as the "independent Christian feast-day", the further and further they progressed in independence and arrogance. That is the only significant part Sunday had to play in the history of the **not** so 'early Church'.*

At last we arrive at a point where it has become possible to endorse an entire paragraph – and that a significant one – in *God in Creation*:

*"Historically speaking, the increasing independence of the Christian feast-day ("Sunday"), and its subsequent replacement of Israel's sabbath, must no doubt be interpreted as the visible sign of Christianity's abandonment of Judaism or, to be more precise, as the sign of the end of the determining influence of Jewish Christians on the Christian faith. The Bar Kochba rebellion of 132 to 135, the destruction of Jerusalem by the emperor Hadrian, and his prohibition of the observance of Jewish laws in the Roman empire were the events of decisive importance in this process. **Now** the celebration of Sunday became the identifying mark of Christians, and at the same time the sign differentiating them from the Jews. This meant that they were not subjected to the  *Fiscus Judaicus* and **did not have to suffer** the anti-Jewish repressions of the state. In the Christian community in Rome, the sabbath was even degraded into an anti-Jewish fast-day. The declarations of many popes and theologians belonging to this period prove that **it was now that the resurrection of Christ was introduced** into the complex of arguments justifying the independent Christian Sunday. ..."*

As Hesse says, the day “was invested with an interest not before attached to it, and became worthy of the new title which it afterwards obtained from the partakers in and preachers of Christ’s resurrection”. (See Part 2, p. 213, Par. 6.3.1.1.) Sunday’s Christian meaning was artificially acquired – crafty and dishonestly. But worse, Sunday’s Christian meaning has been artificially **maintained** – crafty and dishonestly nurtured and venerated.

Moltmann is still occupied with explaining Sunday’s Christian origin by analogy of the Sabbath. He has very little to say on Sunday’s independence and necessity. He is forced to conclude, “As far as the theological legitimation (of Sunday) is concerned, it is important to run counter to this historical development of the Christian Sunday and to preserve the link between the Christian feast-day and Israel’s Sabbath; for otherwise the Christian feast-day is threatened with paganisation. The Christian Sunday neither abolishes Israel’s sabbath, nor supplants it; and there should be no attempt to replace the one with the other. To transfer the sabbath commandment to the Christian Sunday is wrong, both historically and theologically. The Christian feast-day must rather be seen as the messianic extension of Israel’s sabbath. ‘The dream of completion’ still awaits the completion of the dream.”

Sunday’s dependence on the Sabbath is its only reason for being – in Moltmann’s dreams. Moltmann’s presupposition for Sunday’s legitimacy is its dependence on *Israel’s sabbath*. But the dependence is no more than assumed. Sober fact is, ‘*The dream of completion*’ had come true. Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead **IS** “the completion of the dream”. And the dream was the Sabbath’s; its actualisation and *theological legitimisation* were God’s. From now on *the Christian feast-day must be seen as the Messianic – Christian – existentiality of Israel’s sabbath* – in fact, *as the Messianic extension of the creation-Sabbath*. As a result, *as far as the theological legitimisation of the Christian Sabbath is concerned, it is important to run this historical development to its promised, expected and inevitable “finishing” and ‘completion’ in order to preserve the link between the Christian feast-day and the Sabbath of the creation and of Israel; for otherwise the Christian feast-day is threatened with legalism and “superstition” (Calvin). The Christian Sabbath neither abolishes Israel’s Sabbath, the Sabbath of the Law, or the Sabbath of the creation, nor supplants it; and there should be no attempt to replace it with another. To transfer the Sabbath commandment to the Christian Sabbath is right and ‘legitimate’, both historically and theologically. But the Old Testament Sabbath must rather be seen as the messianic extension or promise of the Christian Feast-Day-Sabbath. ‘The dream’ received its long awaited completion through the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ. For what reason*

and by what means? By this: *If the reason for the Christian Feast-Day is that it is the day of Christ’s resurrection, and hence ‘the Lord’s Day’, then this very reasoning makes it clear that the day anticipated, not merely is the Sabbath Rest-Day of the End-time, but also the Day of the Beginning of ‘the New Creation’.* According to the Christian view, the New Creation begins with the raising of Christ from the dead – that ‘world’ exactly of Old Testament expectancy. *Just as Israel’s Sabbath turns our gaze to God’s works in creation and to our own human week-day work, as being the Christian Feast of the Resurrection, the Sabbath also looks forward into the future to God’s works of a New Creation .... Just as Israel’s Sabbath confers a share in God’s repose, so as being the Christian Feast of the Resurrection, the Sabbath also confers a share in the Power of the New Creation ... Just as Israel’s Sabbath is pre-eminently a day of remembrance and thanksgiving, so as being the Christian Feast of the Resurrection, the Sabbath also and pre-eminently is a day of New Beginning, and of Hope ....*

(I have not used quotation marks not only for the obvious changes which I have made, but more importantly for the Day I presuppose answers the requirements of the passage – which is not the Sunday as Moltmann presupposes, but which is the only day these things could possibly be said of “according to the Scriptures” – which is the Sabbath of the LORD your God, the Lord’s Day, the Seventh Day of the week.)

“It is not for nothing”, Moltmann challenges, “that the Church looks upon the day of the Christian feast of the resurrection as ‘the first day’ of the week. Every week is set within the vision of the new creation, and is begun in the hope of resurrection and eternal life”.

It is just as possible – barely on account of things – that the Church could have entertained the same worldview from the point of view of the Sabbath. *It would be not for nothing that the Church looks upon the day of the Christian feast of the resurrection as ‘the Sabbath day’ or Seventh Day of the week. Every week is set within the vision of the new creation, and is begun in the hope of resurrection and eternal life.* No contradiction – as far as logic or principle is concerned – results from taking the Sabbath instead of the *Sunday* as starting-point. But that is not important. What is important though is that **the thrust of this reasoning** depends or should depend upon the **true nature** – the Scriptural character – **of the day** from which the consequences are supposed to flow. If the Sunday arrogates that position, it falsely claims the properties and qualities for fulfilling the role of *Christian day, of feast of the resurrection day, of day of the new creation, of day of hope and eternal life.* Never and nowhere in the Scriptures Old or New had the First Day of the week been allowed such prowess or precedence; always and everywhere in the Scriptures Old

and New instead, by the single fact of God's speaking concerning it, does the Seventh Day of the week, constantly receive such prowess and precedence.

Now please, don't let the Sunday-darian say he doesn't understand because I am talking unintelligible things. For surely he didn't object when we listened to Moltmann while he in much the same language and style alleged the same things of the First Day of the week! The only difference is that his has no Scripture and no historicity to back it up. And his has not the nature or character of a Sabbath, which is that of Gospel-Promise, Gospel-Expectancy, and Gospel-Fulfilment. The First Day of the week is a stranger to the Message of the Scriptures of God's Finishing in Jesus Christ since the first day of the creation to its very last. "After all, although the Sabbath of the creation was the seventh day for God, for the human beings who were created on the sixth day, it was the first day they experienced." The Sabbath was – as we have seen from different angles – *the first day human beings experienced* the Love and Grace of God – in fact, the Redemption and New Creation of God. Only the Sabbath may truly be called *The Feast of the Beginning* of the **true humanity** – the humanity of the New Creation. (Refer our previous talk on Barth and the New Humanity.)

"If we may be permitted to distribute the weight of the 'completing' and the 'beginning' in this way between the seventh day and the first, then the day of creation's completion is open for the day of the new creation ...." Accepted! Endorsed! But only if speaking "Concerning the Seventh Day" *the seventh day AS the first*, both *the 'beginning' and the 'completing'*, for "God the Seventh Day rested" – in which He for man created a New Beginning through Jesus Christ in finishing all the works of God in resurrection from the dead.

"Then the day of creation's completion is open for the day of the new creation, and the first day of the new creation has as its precondition the day when the original creation was completed." The Seventh Day of God's creating – by *precondition* of God's Rest – is God's Sabbath Day and man's first day of *eternal life*. Then and thereby *the day of creation's completion is open for its (future) day of the New Creation*. And the Sabbath then, by *precondition* of Christ's resurrection from the dead, is *Feast-Day of the New Creation*. "The new creation has as its precondition the day when the original creation was completed". True, but only conditionally. **The true dependence is the opposite:** *The original creation has as its precondition the day when the New Creation was completed* – and that was when "in Sabbath's time", Christ rose from the dead and it again, as "in the beginning" was "on the Seventh Day". *The original creation and its completion expect the New Creation, depend on it and are sustained by the New Creation*. It lives by it just as

the consummation and Return of Christ live by the power of God's eternal incarnation in Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead. Says Moltmann on pp. 294 / 5, "If the reason for the Christian feast-day is that it is the day of Christ's resurrection, and hence 'the Lord's day', then this very reasoning makes it clear that the day anticipates, not merely the sabbath rest of the End-time, but also the beginning of the 'new creation'." How is it possible another day could "*anticipate*", than "the Sabbath of the LORD your God", "the Seventh Day" (of the week) "concerning (which) He spoke", "through the Son", "in these last days" as "in the beginning" – and, "according to the Scriptures"? How is it possible another day could "*anticipate*", than "*the day of Christ's resurrection*"? To say Sunday would, is as good as to say Tuesday would, for neither are expected and neither themselves expect or "*anticipate*" the eschatological "great day of the Lord" of Jesus Christ – not by the great and many deeds of God that signify his Sabbath Day.

The same reversal should be done in this phrase of Moltmann's, "... the first day of the new creation has as its precondition the day when the original creation was completed". It is "*the day when the original creation was completed*" that "*has as its precondition*" ""... the first day of the new creation". Nevertheless, if as Moltmann says ""... the first day of the new creation has as its precondition the day when the original creation was completed"", how could he or anyone think of Sunday? He continues, "When the early church called the day of the Christian feast of the resurrection 'the eighth day', its counting of the days themselves was at fault; but through this designation it pointed the Christian Sunday towards the Sabbath of Israel, and laid before Israel the vista of the day of the new creation." One cacophonous element in Moltmann's reasoning is the phrase "*the Christian Sunday*". It should read "*the Christian Sabbath*" for the obvious tenor of his own argument demands it. *When he calls the day of the Christian feast of the resurrection 'the Christian Sunday', his counting as well as appreciation and estimation of the days themselves are at fault. For through this designation, "the Christian Sabbath", the Sabbath points to the Sabbath of Israel, and lays before Israel the vista of the day of the New Creation. The Sabbath of the Seventh Day of creation and of Israel is cosmic eschatological sign – sign of the Christ and of the Christian Sabbath of the Lord or 'Lord's Day'. "Every week is set within the vision of the New Creation, and is begun in the hope of the resurrection and eternal life."* This is eschatology prospectively as well as retrospectively. It is true of one and the same Day – the Day thus spoken of by God, both "*the Christian Sabbath*" and "*the Sabbath of Israel*". In fact, Israel has never been in possession of God's Sabbath Day. To start one's reasoning from the presupposition of "*the Sabbath of Israel*" is totally wanton. We repeat,

'the first day' of the creation and particularly its Seventh Day of God's ending or completing "all his works", "has as its precondition the day when the original creation was completed" – in Jesus Christ and through Him in resurrection from the dead! This is eschatology. This is eschatology prospectively as well as retrospectively. Its essence and content and fullness – its eternal presence, is Jesus Christ.

We do NOT "have to find a Christian way of sanctifying the sabbath" – it is not permitted to be a fabricated thing. We have to find the *Christian celebration* of the Sabbath's intrinsic and divinely graced holiness and sanctity – which is its being put apart for God's purpose in Jesus Christ "for the sake / for the better / for the redemption of man" in the worship of Himself in the Body that is Christ's. "Unconsciously and involuntary ... something of the rest and happiness of Israel's (of all Israel's) *Sabbath*" will be shared in common and in God's communion with man and creation, "wholly in the liberty of Christ's resurrection for the New Creation". **THE SABBATH** "will again become the authentic Christian feast of the resurrection" which it used to be during *early Christian history* when it marked each and every of the Church's celebrations in congregation and contemplation of the Sabbath Day.

It is a matter of either or – either the Sabbath all together (which indicates the day of man's ceasing from his own endeavour and finding rest in God's effort on his behalf) and nothing of the Sunday; or the Sunday all together and nothing of the Sabbath and nothing of the Bible. Thus it has proven itself through reality and history. It is the only aspect of truth about the Sunday – it cannot tolerate the Lord's Sabbath Day. It must itself be sign and principle of rule and dominion. It is either God, or Ba-el – "the sun god" to whom '*belongs the day*' – idiomatically, ideologically and idolatrously. "Choose ye today whom ye will serve!"

The Sabbath of the LORD your God cannot be "the sabbath of creation", "the ecological day of rest", "so that nature too can celebrate its sabbath". That means to deny, defame and to insult the only Christian Sabbath, the Bible Sabbath, "the Lord's Day". TRUE "Christianity celebrates the messianic feasts of Christ's salvation history" that are all concentrated through the Sabbath Day like the sun's rays of light through the magnifying glass. (See illustration on p. 198, Par. 5.1.1.6.3.7.) *It does not know the feast of the veneration of creation, the Sun's Day* – which doesn't belong in *Christianity* but in paganism, heathendom and in anti-Christ. Christianity is the Faith that "celebrates the feasts of its salvation history; but before all else it celebrates the sabbath ..." the Sabbath of the *NEW Creation*. *Before all else it celebrates the Day* in which God finished all his works, raising Jesus from the dead. In the universal crises of the modern world it is necessary and timely for Christianity to make fast the Resurrection Faith of its Sabbath Day.

These thoughts on Moltmann's ideas of the Sabbath in *God in Creation* are not complete or even systematic. I at first planned to make them a starting point only with the view to a thoroughgoing investigation and critique. But time won't allow. And I think Moltmann's "*sabbath*" is quite correctly understood by now. Moltmann's later thoughts on the Sabbath – several years since *God in Creation* – must now be looked at. It must be done quickly, before we can proceed with the real objectives of Paragraph 7.7, *The Sabbath – Cosmic Eschatological Sign*.

### **FROM THE CROSS TO THE RESURRECTION**

It is something to be passionate about if ever there was.

While we looked at the Sabbath in *God in Creation* we tried to emphasise aspects of the Sabbath-doctrine which Moltmann not only neglected but refused, namely that for the Sabbath to be *Christian Faith*, it must be *Resurrection Faith*. But we also referred to the other side of the Sabbath-truth, namely that it refers to and bears on **Christ in his suffering for the sins of many**. Notably was our reflections on Flavel in this regard.

Now the titles of an earlier book by Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, and of a later one, *The Coming of God*, both point in the direction of the suffering God. God who as Christ overcame, will come again, as Christ who as God suffered – they will look up and will bewail the One whom they have pierced.

"Where is God?" someone asked (p. 273/4 *The Crucified God*) when *the SS hanged two Jewish men and a youth*. And the survivor of *Auschwitz* "heard a voice in myself answer: "Where is he? He is here. He is there hanging on the gallows ....""

Jesus conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary is this suffering God. He is this "the Lamb of God slain from before the foundation of the world" ... from eternity. **In suffering** "for man", God is. Being "for man", His suffering is **in God**. The One who bends low, who in fact submerses himself below human beings in the woes of their sinning, is the One Who lifts them up and out of the mire and molten inferno. He, is our God and Saviour.

The Sabbath is Resurrection Day of this, **Suffering** God. He makes man's time, His time. Humanly speaking it is the absolute of impossibility, like God being crucified! Yet God proves Himself God in this His distinctive ability – this His Divine Potency of being the Suffering God. God's Will and Desire, Hope and Love is to die for the sins of the lost. God having an interest in man's **time**, is God in Christ in Divine **Suffering**. It means God's Love above all else. Love is essential of the suffering God and Suffering is essential of the loving God. He spends his **TIME**, **WITH** human beings. Be not astonished when you see

GOD, crucified. As much as you must be surprised at seeing Him rise from the dead, GOD, victorious, as much be surprised at seeing HIM, on the tree of death. Who but God is able to in death call victory: “It is finished”? These words only God can utter, and only God “*there*” – “*on the gallows*”! Then be not surprised that God visits man in the Son of Man and Servant of the LORD on “This Day” in which “these words are fulfilled in your ears”. This is God’s “Day”, “fulfilled in your ears”. “This day”, God and Man, Fulfilment and History, Word and Suffering, are at harmony through this signal Event.

*“(N)ot only would suffering affect God’s pathos externally, so that it might be said that God Himself suffers at the human history of injustice and force, but suffering would be the history in the midst of God Himself ... (T)he experiences of the passion and the suffering of God lead into the inner mystery of God himself in which He Himself confronts us.”* (The Crucified God, p. 274)

God Himself confronts us “this day” – “on the Sabbath Day”. God Himself confronts us in both his suffering and dying and rising from the dead and exaltation – both in His glory **and** humbling. “On the Sabbath” – “this day” – of both the darkness and the light, of the night and the day, is day of the Christ-Event, of the single Event to “the obtaining of eternal salvation” and to the “entering into God’s Rest”.

A. “These words fulfilled this day” **as God enters** into human existence and into human existentiality, are clarion call OF THE PATH OF THE CROSS TO THE RESURRECTION. From the cross, “It is finished!” – the last day in the time and history of man and the creation. “He went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath Day”. Jesus incarnate in the Body that is Christ’s on the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath of the creation promises: God “for man”! – a matter of the forgiveness of sins, and how victoriously!

Application: The Christian Doctrine of the Sabbath has but one thing to proclaim: The Grace of Resurrection-Faith! Christian Ethics of Sabbath-keeping shall follow on this basis or be the self-righteousness of a salvation by the works of the Law and in principle the dishonouring of both the Sabbath and the Law.

B. “*God Himself suffers at the human history*”. THE PATH OF THE CROSS TO THE RESURRECTION begins where “in the beginning ... God” and ends where “Fulfilled are this day these words”. Jesus “ended” that divine path from “the beginning”. To “end all God’s works” He through suffering triumphed in resurrection from the dead “in Sabbath’s-time”.

Application: It cannot be fathomed how Jesus could reach the Sabbath Rest of God and *Christian celebration* of it misses the Sabbath Day and goes “*beyond the sabbath*” to the First Day of the week?

Something drastic must be wrong. It is man’s presumptuousness, leaving behind what to God is “full” but to man is less. The First Day of the week is man’s sin of resolute dissatisfaction – his accusation against God to improve. God shall visit Christianity because of its sin to revere the First Day of the week and to despise his Sabbath Day. It will be a visit of judgement and not of mercy, a judgement of rejection and not of forgiveness. (No *Allversöhnung* awaits “despisers” – Acts 13.)

“What does it matter?”, arrogance asks! Christianity has never had reason to accept the Sunday and reject the Sabbath while it has had the total Gospel (– not the Law!) for reason to accept the Sabbath and reject the Sunday. That is what matters. If Christ Jesus matters, truth and truthfulness unite and truth and the lie part ways.

Conclusion: Christianity has equal debt and equal obligation to confess and repent of its trampling underfoot the Rest of the Sabbath of the Lord’s Day: Equal – the Sabbatharians through the Law and the Sabbatharians against the Law. Sunday-keeping is as much Sabbatharianism and the deification of Institutionalism as is Sabbath-keeping by reason of the Law. “*Das Christentum steht und fällt mit der Wirklichkeit der Auferweckung Jesu von den Tod durch Gott. Es gibt in Neuen Testament keinen Glauben, der nicht a priori bei der Auferstehung Jesu einsetz. ... Christliche Glaube, der nicht Auferstehungsglaube ist, kann darum weder christlich noch Glaube genannt werden.*” It is the second time we quote from *Theologie der Hoffnung*, p. 150. We might only add, that *there is no Old Testament Faith that not a priori connects* (‘kicks in’) *at the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

Proclamation of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected offers the inevitable ethical challenge of Sabbath-keeping, and Sabbath-keeping offers the exceptional ethical challenge of proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected. Will the Church – The One Body Which Is Christ’s – accept the challenge of the Sabbath of the Lord’s Day as cosmic eschatological sign of “the Faith of Jesus”?

**7.7.1.17.**  
**Moltmann Finds The Sabbath's "Partner"**

Jürgen Moltmann, in his *Preface to The Coming of God, Christian Eschatology*, SCM Press, 1996, translator Margaret Kohl, p. xi, says, "... Christian eschatology has nothing to do with apocalyptic 'final solutions' ... for its subject is not 'the end' at all. On the contrary, what it (eschatology) is about, is the new creation of all things. Christian eschatology is the remembered hope of the raising of the crucified Christ, so it talks about beginning afresh in the deadly end. 'The end of Christ – after all that was his true beginning', said Ernst Bloch. Christian eschatology follows the christological pattern in all its personal, historical and cosmic dimensions: **in the end is the beginning.**"

"In the last thirty years", says Moltmann (p. xii-xiii), "I have travelled a long theological road. A road with many surprises and many bends. ... In 1985, in the doctrine of God (**God in Creation**), the goal and culminating point was God's **sabbath**; in this doctrine about the future (**The Coming of God**), I am focussing attention on the goal of God's eschatological **Shekinah**, in which the whole creation will be new and eternally living, and every created thing will with unveiled face arrive at its own self."

Moltmann himself here, (Seite 13) "Ich bin in den letzten 30 Jahren einen langen theologischen Weg gegangen mit vielen Überraschungen und Kurven. ... In diesem Buch über Eschatologie laufen die verschiedenen Horizonte des Ewigen Lebens, des ewigen Reiches und der ewigen Scöpfung **auf einen Punkt zu**: auf die kosmische Schechina Gottes: Gott will zu seiner »Wohnung«, in seiner Schöpfung, der heimat seiner Identität in der Welt, und in ihr zu seiner »Ruhe«, seiner vollendeten, ewigen Freude kommen. Wie es mir 1985 in der Schöpfungslehre »Gott in der Schöpfung«, im **Zielpunkt** um den **Sabbat** Gottes ging, so geht es mir in dieser Zukunftslehre im **Zielpunkt** um die eschatologische **Schechina Gottes, in der die ganze Schöpfung neu und ewig lebendig wird** und jedes Geschöpf mit aufgedecktem Angesicht zu sich selbst kommt."

On page 16, Moltmann says, "Worauf hoffen wir wirklich? Wir hoffen auf das Reich Gottes. Das ist zuerst eine Hoffnung für Gott, dass nämlich Gott zu seinem Recht an seiner Scöpfung, zu seinem Frieden an seinem Sabbat, und zu seiner ewigen Freude an seinem Ebenbild, den Menschen, komme. Die Grundfrage biblischer Eschatologie lautet: Wann wird sich Gott in seiner Gottheit an Himmel und Erde erweisen? Und die Antwort liegt in der Verheissung des kommenden Gottes: »Alle Länder sind seiner Herrlichkeit voll« (Jes 6,3)."

P. xvi : "What do we really and truly hope for? We hope for the Kingdom of God. That is first and foremost a hope for God , the hope that God will arrive at his rights in his creation, at his peace in his sabbath, and at his eternal joy in his image, human beings. The fundamental question of biblical eschatology is: when will God show himself in his divinity to heaven and earth? And the answer is to be found in the promise of the coming God: "the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6.3)."

Seite 311, "Die irdische Schöpfung ist Zeitoffen für die Geschichte ihres Heils und ihres Verderbens. In ihren konstruktiven Möglichkeiten ist die irdische Zeit darum die Zeit der Verheissung. **Das Wesen ihrer Zeit ist Zukünftigkeit**, wie ja auch ihr Anfang die Zukunft gewesen ist. Sie ist **für die Einwohnung ihres Schöpfers geschaffen** und darum **unvollendet** so lange sie nicht zur Heimat Gottes geworden ist. Darauf weist der siebte Tag, der die Schöpfung »vollendet«, hin. Die Sabbatruhe, mit der der Schöpfer seine Schöpfung segnet, ist die der Schöpfung eingestiftete **Verheissung** ihrer Vollendung in der eschatologischen Schechina Gottes. Alle Dinge hat Gott im Dual geschaffen, nur den Sabbat im Singular. Darum **wartet der Sabbat auf seinen Partner**. Der ist nach jüdischer Vorstellung das geschichtliche Volk Israel, zu dem alle sieben Tage die »Königin Sabbat« kommt, um sich mit ihm zu vermählen. Das ist eschatologisch aber zweifellos die **endgültige Schechina** Gottes in seiner Schöpfung, **der der Sabbat** sozusagen **ihre Stelle frei hält**. Die Sabbatruhe Gottes ist als Fest der Schöpfung **der Anfang ihrer Vollendung**; die endgültige Schechina Gottes ist die **Vollendung ihres Anfangs** in jenem »Fest ohne Ende« (Athanasius). **Der Sabbat ist der Schechina Gottes in der Zeit**. Die Schechina ist der Sabbat Gottes im Raum."

English p. 283, "The time of earthly creation is open for the history of its salvation and its perdition. In its constructive potentialities, earthly time is therefor the time of **promise**. The essence of its time is futurity, as indeed its beginning too was the future. It was **created for the indwelling** of its Creator, and is hence **unfinished** as long as it has not yet become God's home-country. The seventh day which 'finishes' creation, points to this. The sabbath rest with which the Creator blesses his creation is the promise of its consummation in God's eschatological **Shekinah, a promise built as endowment into creation** itself. God created everything in dualities, only the sabbath is in the singular. So **the sabbath awaits her partner**. According to the Jewish idea, this partner is the historical people of Israel, to whom 'Queen Sabbath' comes as bride every seventh day. Eschatologically, however, the (Sabbath's) partner undoubtedly is God's final Shekinah in his creation. **For this Shekinah the sabbath, so to speak, keeps its place open**. As the feast of creation, **God's sabbath**"

**rest is the beginning of creation's consummation; God's final Shekinah is the completion of that beginning in the 'feast without end' of which Athanasius speaks. The sabbath is God's Shekinah in time. The Shekinah is God's sabbath in space.**

Das zeitliche Muster der Schöpfung gibt nach dem ersten Schöpfungsbericht der irdische Schöpfung keineswegs nur die irreversibel fließende Zeit mit, sondern die durch die Sabbattage und Sabbatjahre rhythmisch unterbrochene und geordnete Zeit. Rhythmus ist Wiederholung und Fortschritt zugleich. Im Rhythmus der sabbatlichen Unterbrechungen der »fließende Zeit« schwingt die irdische Schöpfung, die Menschen, die Tiere und die Erde, in der kosmischen Liturgie der Ewigkeit. Die verfließende Zeit renegiert sich aus der Gegenwart der Ewigkeit im sabbatlichen Rhythmus der Tage, der Jahre und der Jahrsiepte, um auf den messianischen Sabbat der endzeitlichen und durch ihn auf den eschatologischen Sabbat der ewigen Schöpfung vorzubereiten.

“The time-pattern in creation – according to the first creation account – by no means provides earthly creation only with time's irreversible flow; it also confers time that is rhythmically interrupted and ordered through the sabbath days and the sabbath years. Rhythm is at once repetition and progress. In the rhythm of the sabbath interruptions of 'time's flow', earthly creation – human beings, animals and the earth – vibrate in the cosmic liturgy of eternity. The ever-flowing stream of time regenerates itself from the presence of eternity in the sabbath rhythm of the days, the years, and the seventh year, thus preparing for the messianic sabbath of the End-time and, through that, for the eschatological sabbath of the eternal creation.”

What does Moltmann mean by “the eschatological sabbath of the eternal creation”? His explanation should be found in “the Christian doctrine of the Trinity”, “Die christliche Trinitätslehre” (Seite 333).

One is aware of an uneasiness while reading these lines. It is that strange, Rabbinic, Moltmannian conception, “Shekinah”. It is the same in *The Coming of God* as in *God in Creation*: Moltmann's Sabbath **wants Jesus Christ**. His Shekinah now competes with Christ, then with the Holy Spirit. Obviously Moltmann himself must have felt his Sabbath of *God in Creation* needed a complement. In our considerations of his Sabbath-doctrine in *God in Creation*, we have tried to explain just that deficiency. In *The Coming of God*, Moltmann confirms our finding. He here in *The Coming of God* attempts to fill the vacuum which he left in *God in Creation*. But still Moltmann refuses: It shall not be Jesus Christ that complements and fills the whole meaning of the Sabbath Day; let us yet again try to find a substitute for Christ at least as far as it pertains God's Sabbath Day.

One may find a detailed explanation of the *Shekinah* in *Das Kommen Gottes* in Chapter 4, Par.3, especially p. 333 further. On p. 332 Moltmann writes,

“Die jüdische Lehre von der Schechina versucht, auf diesen Fragen Antwort zu geben ...”. This is the “question” that concerns the “Geschichtliche Räume der Einwohnung Gottes”. Page 331: “Ist Gott der Raum seiner Welt oder kann auch die Welt zum Raum Gottes werden? Geht man davon aus, dass Gott unendlich, die Welt aber endlich ist, dann kann nur Gott der Raum der Welt, nicht aber der Welt der Raum Gottes sein. Nun erzählt aber die Bibel von immer neuen Einwohnungen Gottes in der irdische Welt: Er »wohnt« in der Mitte seines Volkes, er findet seine Wohnung auf dem Zion; er wohnt bei den Zerstreuten im Exil und kehrt mit ihnen zu seiner Wohnung zurück. »Das Wort ward Fleisch und wohnt unter uns«, in Christus »wohnt« die Fülle der Gottheit leibhaftig und am Ende will der ewige Gott bei den Menschen »wohnen«. Wie aber kann der unendliche Gott in irdisch begrenzten Räumen und Gemeinschaffen »wohnen«, ohne diese Räume und Gemeinschaft durch seine Unendlichkeit zu zerstören? Teilt er sich oder lässt er nur gleichsam einen Tropfen vom unendlichen Meer seiner Gottheit in der Menschheit auf dieser Erde wohnen? Verwandelt er sich und macht sich klein, um in einen Tempel, von Menschen gebaut, und einem Volk, von Menschen gebildet, zu wohnen?”

Moltmann answers:

“Die jüdische Lehre von der Shichina versucht, auf diesen Fragen Antwort zu geben.”

He refers (98) to “Das Standardwerk” of A.M. Goldberg for this “Jewish teaching”, which contains “Untersuchungen über die Vorstellung von der Shechina in der frühen rabinnischen Literatur”; to P. Kuhn, *Gottes Selbsterniedrigung in der Theologie der Rabbinen*; and to G. Scholem, *Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit*: “Das passiv-weibliche Moment in der Gottheit”.

From this and from everything else that Moltmann has to say about the *Shekinah*, it appears to me the *Shekinah* is some mystical Fourth Person of the Godhead. But Moltmann insists on the influence Jewish thinking had on his, and in Jewish thinking, however – as in these references – the *Shekinah* would seem to be a certain Spirit-Manifestation of Yahweh or some Second Person next to the Father-figure. Whatever it must supposedly be, Moltmann's “Shekinah” is no Christian concept and no conception of Christian thinking or faith – it is NOT an idea from the Bible. In actual, frank fact: Moltmann makes far too much of “God's Shekinah”.

Moltmann in *The Coming of God*, sensing the shortcoming of his Sabbath in *God in Creation*, tries to supply in that want with the Rabbinic

“*Shekinah of God*”-concept. He still refuses Jesus Christ to be the Sabbath’s “*Partner*”.

Jesus’ **claimed and proclaimed** ‘partnership’ in God’s Sabbath Day – in Christian language and idiom: Jesus’ claimed and proclaimed His “*personal*” interest in God’s Sabbath day – even His “**Lordship**” of God’s Sabbath Day! It means Jesus claimed and proclaimed He is “Lord of the Sabbath Day” by virtue of **Ownership**: “**My** Holy Day”; by virtue of **Authorship**, “the Sabbath was **made**” – (“by Me”); and, by virtue of **Siege by Victory**: “Yahweh **reigns** – LORD – for ever and ever”. (“I cast out devils and do cures ... and the third day shall be perfected”!) Every healing of Jesus on the Sabbath Day prophesied his victory through resurrection “in Sabbath’s-time” over death and the “killer from the beginning”.

“*Die christliche Lehre von der Inkarnation des Logos und der Inhabitation des Geistes ist eine andere Form der Antwort.*” Here Moltmann refers to G. Scholem once more (99), under the categories of “*Geist des Lebens, Gottes geist und seine Schechina*”.

“*Beide* (these other forms of the answer to the question of what the *Shekinah* is) zeigen so viele Parallelen, dass man davon ausgehen kann, dass die zweite die erste voraussetzt, bzw. auf dieselben biblischen Voraussetzungen wie sie zurückgeht. Der gedanke der Schechina verbindet den unendlichen Gott, mit einem endlichen, irdischen Raum, in dem er wohnen will. Shechina-Theologie ist Tempel-Theologie. Schechina meint den Akt der Herabkunft Gottes und dessen Ergebnis in seiner Einwohnung. Gott will an einem bestimmten Ort gegenwärtig sein und sich offenbaren. Diese besondere gegenwart Gottes ist nicht Teil seiner allgemeinen Gegenwart, sondern ist in einem besonderen Akt der Herabkunft und Selbsterniedrigung begründet. Da Gott das Subjekt dieser selbsterniedrigung und Herabkunft bleibt, wird durch diesen Gedanken (der *Schechina* als “*Diese besondere gegenwart Gottes*”) seine Souveränität nicht angetastet. ...”

Moltmann assumes God is “Subject” of the “*Shekinah*” – “God dwells (here)”. But he also assumes the “*Shekinah*” as Divine Subject of “*this Self-humiliation and descent*” the place of God’s dwelling is Deified – personified – and as Divine Person “*acts*”. I am sure Moltmann goes too far. Had he stayed with the *Shekinah* as “**place** of God’s dwelling” – “place” whether in time or space – he would have been safe. Neither of the Three Persons of the Trinity are **distinguished** in or by “*this Self-humiliation and descent*” of which the *Shekinah* is the (divine) “*Subject*”. On the contrary, the perception of God’s “*Trinitarian*” Being gets lost. Naturally – from the nature of the “*act*” of “*Self-humiliation and descent*” which *specifically* belongs to the Second Person of the ‘*Trinitarian*’ God – it is Jesus Christ who is dissolved and

mystified away.

Moltmann finds Hegel’s three *modes* of the “*Absolute*” (“*the kingdom of the Father*”, “*the kingdom of the Son*”, and the “*kingdom of the Holy Spirit*”) (Eng. p. 330)) inadequate for the eschatological “*result in (God’s) in-stay*”. Protests Moltmann, “*The one divine Subject*” of “*Hegel’s triadic consideration of the Absolute, is modalism in extreme form*”, that “*makes a divine eschatology inconceivable*”. Meanwhile Moltmann reckons his own “*one divine Subject*” – the “*Shekinah*” (even though not really part of the Godhead) – serves eschatology best. Moltmann exceeds “*modalism in extreme form*”! He does not limit himself to his **own** definition of what “*God’s Shekinah*” is, namely God’s **place** of abode in the world and cosmos. He treats God’s *Shekinah* as if it were itself, God.

No reason can be presented against Jesus Christ for being the eschatological counterpart-“*Partner*” of the Sabbath Day; no reason can be presented why the eschatological counterpart-“*Partner*” of the Sabbath Day must be this strange, theistic *consideration of the Absolute*, which Moltmann calls “*God’s Shekinah*”. Were Moltmann to allow the Sabbath its Christian origin, meaning and content, he had to admit its resurrection-character and validity; he had to admit the Sabbath is God’s *Shekinah* by virtue of the Risen Christ! Christ is God’s Place of Abode with humanity – the Cosmic and Widest and Fullest Place of God’s abode with humanity! Also the “*personal*”, most intimate and private Abode among men is Jesus the Risen Christ. Jesus Christ is THIS Abode of God with humanity and this world and cosmos – a prerogative He shares with no other place or time. He EVER and FOR ever is God’s LIVING “*In-Stay*” with and among men.

The Holy Spirit is not this Dwelling of God. The Holy Spirit is the Agent for bringing together that which belong together – God and men – and He does so as the Power of God. “I”, says Jesus, “shall be with you always” ... and everywhere! And, says He, “the Spirit shall witness of Me”. The Spirit shall NOT witness of Himself. To identify God’s *Shekinah* – God’s dwelling place – either with the Christ or with the Spirit is not “*biblical*”; it is not “*Trinitarian*”.

It is possible to ‘identify’ things without in so many words to say ‘a’ equals ‘b’. Simply by attributing to the *Shekinah* of God, God’s attributes, God’s acts, or God’s emotions, is to make of it, God, or to make it equal with God. This in principle applies to God’s Sabbath as surely as it applies to God’s *Shekinah*. Jesus Christ is God’s Abode among men, in this world, and throughout the cosmos, all history and all time – a prerogative He shares with no other place or time or event. Therefore: The Sabbath Day of God without Jesus Christ as its full Content and Reason and without its sole basis of being, being to serve the



Lord of the Sabbath Day, IS NOT the Shekinah or place of God's dwelling with his People in time-space. A Sabbath Day that is God's Sabbath, but not because of Jesus Christ – and He, resurrected from the dead – is impossible. (It consistently is idolatry.) There's no Sabbath Day (Seventh Day) but the Christian. The Sabbath of the Law has been abolished the moment it lost its dependence on Christ.

*“Diese besondere gegenwart Gottes (Gottes Shechina) ist nicht Teil seiner allgemeinen Gegenwart.”*

*“General” or ‘omni’-presence’ is an attribute all three Persons of the Godhead equally share exclusively.*

*“Diese besondere gegenwart Gottes (Gottes Shechina), ... ist in einem besonderen Akt der Herabkunft und Selbsterniedrigung begründet.”*

The *“particular Act of descent and Self-humbling or Self-humiliation”* of God actualised in the historical Event of Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected – in the Person of Jesus Christ the Son of God Incarnate. It actualised and realised nowhere else, in nobody else, and in no other time. The Shekinah is not the *“subject”* of the *“particular Act of descent and Self-humbling or Self-humiliation”* – it is God.

*“Da Gott das Subjekt dieser Selbsterniedrigung und Herabkunft bleibt wird durch diesen Gedanken seine Souveränität nicht angetastet, – im Gegenteil: Gott ist so souverän, dass er sie nicht behaupten muss, sondern sich in die menschliche Welt hineingeben kann, zum »Gott Israels« und zum »Vater Jesu Christi« wird und in Israel und in dem Sohn Jesus Christus »da« ist.”*

*“Diesen Gedanken”*: *“This concept”*, here, is that the Shekinah as being God itself; is subject of *“this descent and self-humiliation”*.

Besides thus through his *“Shekinah”* having removed every difference between Judaism and Christianity, Moltmann has removed all meaning of Jesus Christ for humanity in that the Jews don't need Jesus because they have this *Divine Shekinah* doing everything for them that Jesus is supposed to have done for them. In fact, they as the *“People of Israel”* is identically the Abode of God as Jesus Christ for the Christians is the Abode of God. So perhaps could Buddha for the Buddhists be “God's Shekinah”, etc.? (Knitter?)

But just in case I have misinterpreted Moltmann, let's see what the English translation says here:

Page 303, third paragraph:

*“The Christian doctrine of the trinity, which distinguishes divine Persons in the unity of God, was certainly in its classic form formulated in Greek and Roman terms, but in content it goes back to the Old Testament approaches of Shekinah theology, as New Testament language about the indwellings of God shows. Dogmatic christology has tried to*

*interpret the indwelling fulness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ in a way that resembles contraction theology, drawing on the ideas of the kenosis of the Logos according to Philipians 2. Through his self-humiliation and his emptying of himself, the Eternal ‘took on the form of a servant’, in order, like the Shekina, to share the sufferings of those who are his, as their Brother, and through his sufferings on the cross to redeem them.”*

From p. 302 (332) the English reads,

*“The Jewish doctrine of the Shekinah tries to give an answer to these questions. The Christian doctrine about the incarnation of the Logos and the inhabitation of the Spirit is the answer in another form....”*

It is not *“the inhabitation of the Spirit”* that is *“Christian doctrine”*. Christian doctrine teaches the indwelling of Jesus Christ THROUGH the Holy Spirit. The believer by the Holy Spirit enjoys Christ, and not *vice versa*.

Whereas Hegel turns the Persons of the Godhead into *modes* of manifestation of *“the Absolute”*, Moltmann turns them into mere **concepts** or perceptions of place or home of God's *“indwellings”*. The People of Israel itself being one “form” of God's Shekinah, it just as well as the Christian concept *“about the incarnation”*, is *“another form”* of *“the inhabitation of the Spirit”*.

Continues this paragraph from p. 302, *“The two (the Jewish and the Christian doctrines) display so many parallels that we can assume that the second (the Christian doctrine) assumes the first (the Jewish doctrine), or goes back to the same biblical presuppositions. The idea of the Shekinah links the infinite God with a finite, earthly space in which he desires to live.”*

This should be understood, that *“the idea of the Shekinah* (the *“idea”* whether in form of that of the nation of Israel or in form of that of the person or rather the *“idea”* of the **personality** of Jesus Christ) *links the infinite God with a finite, earthly space in which he desires to live”*. Moltmann's reasoning here implies – whether intended or not – that the *“Shekinah”* IS God the single Subject that manifests itself or rather *“indwells”* itself – whether in (historical) Israel or in the (conception) of Jesus Christ. Not much, if anything at all, remains of the historic or real Person Jesus Christ as God – God's *“indwelling”* with “his own”. *“The two display so many parallels”* Moltmann makes them look like a cloned genetic string. No! God is not his dwelling place or his indwelling itself. The universe isn't God, nor any single person . . . but this Man Jesus of Nazareth. God leaves place or space – as well as time – wherein he does not indwell but restricts his own presence from (*“contraction theology”*), and so reveals his love – which means his **preference**. In God's preference only is sanctity of the Sabbath Day possible. Only if God does not indwell all time equally can the Sabbath be special time or holy time.

Only if God does not indwell all space equally, can Jesus Christ be the incarnation of God in order to be the “God with us”. Only if there can be ‘change’ or ‘difference’ in God Himself in the sense that He although ‘omni-present’ is not everywhere the same in presence and affection (‘affection’ in the sense of compassion, care, love, favour, or, ‘affection’ in the sense of effectual concentration of God’s own being) can one conceive of God as loving human beings (better that a stone), or of God as loving the saved (and hating the damned), or of God as choosing the Israel of the Faith (while rejecting Israel to the flesh), or of God choosing the Seventh Day (of seven days to human perception precisely the same).

No wonder Moltmann – passionately – believes the “*Allversöhnungslehre*”. Barth dared to say God may surprise us with it. Moltmann doesn’t hesitate to claim catholicity for it.

But let us return to our passage. We see that Moltmann does much more than to let “*(t)he idea of the Shekinah link the infinite God with a finite, earthly space in which he desires to live*”, and in fact makes the Shekinah the infinite God himself that has found and may find ANY finite, earthly space in which to live. Says he,

“*Shekinah theology is temple theology*” ... and it can be any religion’s temple.

“*Shekinah means the act of God’s descent, and its consequence in his indwelling.*” Paul was so sure it was God in Jesus Christ ONLY, he could say that no one has descended who not in fact ascended – Romans 10:7 and Ephesians 1:10. Paul was so naïve he believed the Risen Christ for God’s “*indwelling*” with human beings quite uniquely and singularly in the individual Jesus of Nazareth. I think such naïvité is what God would consider faith – “Christian Faith” – because resurrection-faith . . . because exclusive faith! No different why one would believe the Seventh Day Sabbath! It simply means God’s preferences and his special attachment to one specific day of to the human mind a senseless exception of days which we happen to call the week. It simply means God’s extra the ordinary attention to this day of the week to present himself to human beings by it . . . and never but by virtue of his own Divine Person of “indwelling” “to us-ward” – even Jesus Christ incarnated in the flesh of glory through resurrection from the dead, “for ever and ever to reign” as the song of Moses and of the Lamb goes. If God reigns, also his Sabbath must reign – be different and above its par.

“*Shekinah means the act of God’s descent, and its consequence in his indwelling*” – which means and is God in Christ in the Man Jesus. “*God desires to be present and to reveal himself in a particular place.*” That “*place*” is among men. Nowhere else. What do we know of the extra-terrestrial? Nothing! So don’t let us speculate about the cosmos and God’s Resting Place if this earth and its human beings and of all religious

polity this earth and its human beings be not the place and very centre of gravity of God’s Resting Place in space and time. Don’t let us speculate about the cosmos and God’s Resting Place if God revealed in the Son the Word of God proclaimed among all peoples of the earth the Risen Crucified be not its comprehension, Author and Finisher. Don’t let us speculate about that day of its comprehension, creation and finishing, the Sabbath Day, if God revealed in the Son the Word of God proclaimed among all peoples of the earth the Risen Crucified be not its comprehension, Author and Finisher.

For: “*This special presence of God is not part of his general presence, but is based on a special act of descent and self-humiliation. Since God remains the subject of this self-humiliation and descent, his sovereignty is not infringed . . .*”. Perfect! Even Jesus’ **resurrection** from the dead is the act of God’s Presence seeking its place of abode and rest – its place and abode of “*descent and self-humiliation*”. The very idea that Christ could rise on another day than God’s Day of Rest the Seventh Day of the week is silliness.

Now I must be so audacious as to manipulate Moltmann’s writing a bit, in order to say: “*God remains the subject of this self-humiliation and descent, his sovereignty is not infringed.*” On the contrary: God is so sovereign that He does not have to assert himself, but can **freely** give himself into the human world, **in fact** becomes ‘the God of Israel’ **while being** ‘the Father of Jesus Christ’, and in the Israel **by faith alone** in the Son Jesus Christ, the **Church, truly, is ‘there’**.

The actual Moltmann (translation) reads: “*On the contrary: God is so sovereign that He does not have to assert himself, but can give himself into the human world, becomes ‘the God of Israel’ and ‘the Father of Jesus Christ’, and in Israel and in the Son Jesus Christ, is ‘there’.*” – Emphasis CGE. The world’s difference is clear; thus the identification of “*Israel*” and “*the Son Jesus Christ*”. If Moltmann has it correct, and “*the Son Jesus Christ*” is God’s *Shekinah* while “*Israel*” also is God’s *Shekinah*, and “*the Son Jesus Christ*” IS GOD, then God’s *Shekinah* IS GOD and “*Israel*” also, IS GOD.

That is not “*biblical*”; it is NOT “*Christian Faith*”; it is NOT “*Resurrection Faith*”. IT IS NOT GOD’S SABBATH DAY that has THIS “*Shekinah*” as objective or as “*partner*”.

So we – regrettably – were not mistaken when we first considered the German.

On page 333, Moltmann tells us, “*Die christliche Trinitätslehre, die in der Einheit Gottes göttliche Personen unterscheidet, wurde in ihre klassischen Gestalt zwar griechisch und romisch formuliert . . .*”. So Jesus Christ is the Greek-Roman manifestation of ‘God’s Jewish *Shekinah*’.

**Whether or not “(t)he Christian doctrine of the Trinity ... was certainly in its classic form” as “New Testament language about the indwellings of God shows”, or whether or not it was “formulated in Greek and Roman terms” (Stupidously obvious it was!), it “in content goes back to the Old Testament” and never but never, there encounters or “approaches Shekinah-theology” like Moltmann’s.**

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