

# Sabbaton

An Exposition of Matt. 28:1, and Parallel Passages

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## Argument on Sabbaton

"A DROWNING man will catch at straws." This saying is wonderfully illustrated in the various and contradictory arguments which are resorted to in support of the Sunday Sabbath. Among the weakest of these is that founded upon the Greek of Matt.28:1, where we find the phrase, *eis mian sabbaton*, rendered first day of the week. It is claimed that this really means, and should be translated, "first day of the Sabbaths," as *sabbaton* means Sabbath. Putting this with the phrase before it, it reads, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the Sabbaths." From this, a grand argument is made, thus:-

In the end of the Sabbath means the end of the old series of Sabbaths, that is, the seventh-day Sabbaths, which ended with the day that Christ lay in the tomb; and then the first day of the Sabbaths means the first day of the new series of Sabbaths, which began the day of Christ's resurrection, the first-day Sabbath, thus showing that the old series of Sabbaths ended there, and the new series commenced at the resurrection of Christ. But is there any real truth in this assumption? There is

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not, as may be seen by good authority on the meaning of these terms.

First, on the meaning of the term, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn," etc. This is King James' translation, which is manifestly not the best translation that might be made of the original. Mark, in referring to the same thing, says, "And when the Sabbath was past." Matthew must harmonize with Mark. The following notes and translations by eminent authors will give the reader a correct idea of its meaning:-

"Matt.28:1. *In the end of the Sabbath.* The word *end* here means the same as, after the Sabbath, *i.e.* after the Sabbath was fully completed, or finished, and may be expressed in this manner: In the night following the Sabbath (for the Sabbath closed at sunset), as it began to dawn." - *Barnes' Notes on Matt.28:1.*

"Matt.28:1. *Opse de Sabb.* This must, with Krebs., Wahl., Tittm., Kuim., and Fritz, be explained, 'after the Sabbath,' *i.e.*, as Mark more clearly expresses it, *dia genomenon ton sabbaton*, which must determine the sense here. Of this signification, the commentators adduce examples from Philost., Plut., AElian, Xenophon." - *Bloomfield's Notes.*

"Matt.28:1. *In the end of th Sabbath. Opse de Sabbaton.* After the end of the week: this is the translation given by several eminent critics; and in this way the word *opse* is used by the most eminent Greek writers." - *Clarke on Matt.28:1.*

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"Matt.28:1. And late in the Sabbath, as it was dawning into the first day of the week, came Mary," etc. - *Bible Union.*

"Matt.28.1. Now after the Sabbath, as it was dawning to the first day of the week," etc. - *Diaglott.*

"Matt.28.1. And after the Sabbath, when it began to dawn on the first day of the week," etc. - *Sawyer.*

These authorities are sufficient to show the meaning of that expression. It does not signify the end of a series of Sabbaths, or anything like it, but simply after the Sabbath. But what is the meaning of the phrase, *eis mian sabbaton*, first day of the Sabbaths? Does it not mean the beginning of a new series of Sabbaths? Well, if it does, then we have another new series of Sabbaths, beginning about twenty-eight years after the resurrection of Christ, as recorded in Acts 20:7, where King James' translation says, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together." Here the Greek is the same as Matt. 28.1, *mia ton sabbaton*, the first day of the Sabbaths. If this phrase, in Matt.28.1, means the first day of a new series of Sabbaths, then, of course, this also means the first day of a new series of Sabbaths. We should like to know what new series of Sabbaths commenced way down over twenty-eight years after the resurrection of Christ. So also we have the phrase in 1Cor.16:2, thus having several new series of Sabbaths. The simple truth in the case is this: Among the Hebrews, the Sabbath was the

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principal day of the week, and hence the whole week was frequently called from its name, a Sabbath; and the other days of the week were reckoned from it. Thus, the first day of the week was called the first day of the Sabbath, and so on. That this is so, is pointedly proved by the following eminent authors:-

### **SABBATON - ITS MEANING**

"A period of seven days, a week, sing. and pl. Matt.28:1; Mark 16:9." - *Greenfield's Greek N.T. on Sabbaton.*

"A cessation from labor, rest. the Sabbath, a day of rest: by syndec., a week. Mark 16:7; Luke 18:12; Matt.28:1," etc.- *Pickering's Comp. Lex. of the Greek Language*.

"2. Meton., a *sabbath*, put for the interval from Sabbath to Sabbath; hence a *se'nnight, week*. - *Robinson*.

"Shabbath. 2 perh. *week*, as in the Syriac and Greek. Matt. 28:1; Lev.23;15; comp. Deut.16:9." - *Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*.

"*Sabbaton*. 2 Week, N. T."- *Liddell and Scott*.

"From the circumstance that the Sabbath was the principal day of the week, the whole period of seven days was likewise called, *Shabat*, in Syriac, *Shabta*, in the N.T., *Sabbaton* and *Sabbata*. The Jews, accordingly, in designating the successive days of the week, were accustomed to say, the first day of the Sabbath, that is, of the week; the second day of the Sabbath, that is, Sunday, Monday,

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etc. Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:9" - *Ency. of Relig. Knowl., Art. Week*.

"Sabbath is also taken for the whole week. Luke 18:12. I fast twice in the week: in the Greek it is, I fast twice in the Sabbath." - *Cruden*.

This fast was on the second and fifth days of the week, says Bloomfield in his Greek N.T.

"The seventh day, which we term Saturday, was styled among them (the Jews) the Sabbath, that is, the day of rest. And because this was the most important day of all the week, the whole week came to be called from its name, a *Sabbath*; whence the other days were called also the first day of the Sabbath, the second day of the Sabbath, and so on in their order." - *Nevins' Biblical Antiquities*, p.174.

"The Jews called Sunday one of the Sabbath, that is, the first day of the week. Monday was two of the Sabbath." - *Union Bible Dict., Art. Weeks*.

"*Sabbathum* is also taken for the whole week." - *Calmet., Art. Sabbath*.

Other remarks might be made, and facts stated, showing the absurdity of the argument founded on this phrase; but these certainly are all-sufficient for any candid mind. D.M.C.

## **Grammatical Construction of Matt.28:1**

IN these times it is almost dangerous to explode a heresy; for there are not a few who are ready even to seize the fragments, and caper about with

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them in the highest glee, as if they had discovered a new truth, or been blessed with a flood of new light. There are many now claiming that the first day of the week is called the Sabbath in Matt.28:1, who doubtless learned for the first time that *sabbatone* occurs in that passage, from reading a refutation of that foolish claim.

Let us then again examine the manner in which the first day attempts to find an asylum in Matt.28:1. The passage, in the original, reads thus: "*Opse de sabbatone, te epiphosekouse eis mian sabbatone, eelthe Maria, he*

*Magdaleene,*" <sup>1</sup> etc. A translation is given to these words as follows: "In the end of the Sabbaths, as it began to dawn toward one (or the first) of the Sabbaths, came Mary Magdalene," etc. And on this the following claim is raised: In the end of the Sabbaths, that is, the old series, or seventh-day Sabbaths, as it began to dawn toward the first of a new series of Sabbaths, namely, Sabbaths to be held thereafter upon the first day of the week. What is necessary to sustain this claim? It is necessary, first, that the word *sabbatone* should have a plural signification, and refer to a series of Sabbaths, and, secondly, that the word *first* should agree with *sabbaton* understood; for in that case the idea would be, "as it began to dawn toward the first Sabbath of a new series of Sabbaths." If now it shall appear that the word *sabbatone* has a signification the same as if it was in the singular number, and that the word

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*first* cannot agree with *sabbaton* understood, then the translation given above is incorrect, and the claim based thereon, unfounded.

If now the reader will turn with us to the lexicon and grammar, we will try to ascertain clearly the meaning of the words and the sense of the passage.

*Opse* is defined by Robinson to mean, as a general signification, *late*, after a long time. "With a genitive, the same as *at the end of, at the close of, after.*" Robinson then quotes these words from the Greek of Matt.28:1, "*opse de sabbatone,*" and translates them, "at the end of the Sabbath, *i.e.* after the Sabbath, the Sabbath being now ended."

*De* is simply a continuative particle, signifying *but, and, also,* and the like.

*Sabbatone*. There are two words translated *Sabbath* in the New Testament. The first is *sabbaton*, which is a noun of the second declension, and is always used in the singular number. The second is *sabbata*,<sup>2</sup> 1 a noun of the third declension, and always used in the plural number. But these two words have identically the same signification, and are used interchangeably. Robinson says that where the plural form occurs, it is generally used for the singular. The word here in Matt.28:1, is in the genitive case, which, according to Robinson, determines the meaning of *opse* before it; he,

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as already noticed, having said that *opse* with a genitive signifies at the end of, or after. The genitive is thus used, *Sophocles* S 196, to denote the time when, or place where.

*Te* epiphosekouse: It beginning to dawn. Here we have the article *te* and the participle of the verb *epiphoseko*, which means, according to Robinson "to grow light upon, to dawn upon." Liddell and Scott give it the single signification "to grow toward daylight." The word occurs elsewhere in the New Testament, only in Luke 23:54, where it says that the Sabbath *drew on*; and this use of the word in this instance, Bloomfield explains to be a Jewish idiom to denote the commencement of their day, borrowed from the classic use of the word by the heathen, who commenced their day in the morning. The word cannot have the tropical signification in Matt.28:1, that it has in Luke 23:54, and signify that the first day, according to Jewish reckoning, was drawing on; for the word *opse* signifies that the Sabbath was already past. It must therefore here have its

proper and literal signification, and mean, "as it began to grow toward daylight." The word is here in the dative form for the genitive absolute, Soph. S 226, Note 3, the article *te*, agreeing with *heemera*, day, understood.

Eis is simply a preposition, meaning *to* or *into*.

Mian is a numeral adjective, the first of the cardinal numbers. literally signifying *one*. It is here used, according to a Hebraism, as an ordinal, signifying *the first*. - *Robinson*. The form *mian* is found in the singular number, feminine gender, accusative

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case, from the nominative, *heis, mia, hen*. Being an adjective, it must agree with some substantive, either expressed or understood. Is there any word expressed with which it can agree? The next word is *sabbatone* which is in the genitive plural, and cannot therefore be the word with which the accusative singular, *mian*, agrees. What word, then, shall be supplied? This brings us to the principal claim based upon this text in behalf of the first day of the week. Is the sense of the passage that this is the first of a new series of Sabbaths now introduced? the first Sabbath of a new series? If so, the word first (*mian*) must agree with Sabbath (*sabbatone*, singular) understood. This form is found in the singular number and accusative case, the agreement thus far being all right; but when we look at the gender, we find that *sabbaton* is *neuter*, and *mian*, as already stated, is *feminine*. We cannot, therefore, supply the word *sabbaton*, unless we can perform the ungrammatical miracle of making a feminine adjective agree with a neuter noun.

But, strange to say, some are so determined to have *sabbaton* understood, as to claim that *mian* is neuter! and that the gender of the noun with which it agrees; as much as to say the the adjective has but one form, and is masculine, feminine, or neuter, according to the gender of its noun. This will certainly surprise those who have any acquaintance with the Greek. It is only for the benefit of those who have never studied it, that

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we need to say that adjectives are declined, or take a change of form to express the number and case, exactly the same as nouns: and that they have a change of form also to denote the gender; and the gender of the noun determines absolutely what form of the adjective shall be used to agree with it.

Take, for instance, the word under consideration. The accusative singular, masculine, of the numeral *heis*, is *hena*, accusative feminine, *mian*, accusative neuter, *hen*. Used with a noun in the accusative singular, if masculine, *hena* would be the form of the adjective to be used; if feminine *mian*, if neuter *hen*. If therefore *sabbaton* is the word understood with which the numeral should agree, the form *hen* should have been used, not *mian*; and the fact that *mian*, the feminine form, is used, shows that the noun understood, with which it agrees, *must* be a feminine noun. In this respect the law of the language is absolute and inexorable.

With what, then, does *mian* agree? Scholars and critics who understand thoroughly the idioms of the Greek, tell us that in such sentences the word *day*, *heemera*, is understood. See Greenfield's Greek Testament, Matt.28:1, margin,

also Robinson's Lexicon. *Heemera* is a feminine noun, and hence *mian* can agree with it in every respect; and there is no grammatical inaccuracy involved. Putting in the supplied word, we have *eis mian heemeran sabbatone*, literally, the first day of the Sabbath.

Now it is evident that the word *sabbatone* must here be taken in other than its ordinary sense; for

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"the first day of the Sabbath," the Sabbath itself being only one day, would be a meaningless expression. Turning again to Robinson, we find under the word *sabbaton* the second definition given as follows: "Meton. [that is, by metonymy, a figure of speech in which one word is put for another], a *Sabbath*, put for the interval from Sabbath to Sabbath; hence a *se'nnight week*." "Only after numerals marking the days of the week." Then he refers, for examples, to all those passages in which the phrase, "first day of the week," occurs in the New Testament. And he adds, "In the Talmuds, the days of the week are written; the first, second, third, day in the Sabbath (week); see Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in Matt. 28:1."

In the light of the foregoing facts, presented in a manner so plain that we trust all can understand them, it is not difficult for any one to see that a correct translation of the passage would be: "After the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week."

One question more may arise: How is it to be known when *sabbatone* or *sabbaton* is to be rendered *week*, instead of *Sabbath*? Answer. It is to be rendered *week* whenever it is preceded by a numeral. It is so preceded in every case where the expression, first day of the week, occurs, and also in Luke 18:12, where the Pharisee fasted twice in the (*sabbatou*, genitive singular) week. Hence we translate the word *sabbatone*, as it first occurs in Matt.28:1, by the word Sabbath, because it has no numeral before it; and in the second

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instance of its occurrence, we translate it *week*, because it is preceded by the numeral *mian*. U. S.

### **Sabbaton in Col.2:16**

LUTHER LEE, in his "Theology," p. 375, presents the following criticism on Col.2:16. The text reads thus: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."

On which Mr. Lee says: "To what Sabbath does the apostle refer? He uses the Greek word *sabbaton*, which is everywhere used to denote the seventh-day Sabbath, without giving any notice that he means anything else; and while, by a holy day and the new moon, he includes all other feasts and rests which might be called sabbaths, he leaves nothing but the seventh-day Sabbath to be meant by the sabbath days."

The arguments which Mr. Lee presents to show that Paul refers to the seventh-day Sabbath in Col.2:16, and that consequently, that Sabbath is not binding on Christians, are these: First, the apostle uses the word *sabbaton*,

which everywhere denotes the seventh-day Sabbath; and, secondly, the other terms used in the text cover all other kinds of sabbaths, so that this word must refer here to the seventh-day Sabbath.

He evidently designed to convey to the mind of the reader the idea that the term *sabbaton*, always and in every place, means the seventh-day Sabbath; and we can see the object of this; for unless it does

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always have this meaning, his argument on the use of the term here is null and void. But it will be noticed that he does not directly assert this; nor do we think he would be willing to so far risk his reputation as a scholar as to make such a declaration. He says the term *sabbaton* "is everywhere used to denote the seventh-day Sabbath;" which is true so far as the fact is concerned that whenever the seventh-day Sabbath is spoken of, the term *sabbaton* or its synonym, *sabbata*, is used. But it is quite another thing to say that the word *sabbaton* never means anything else, as he evidently designed to have the reader understand. It may be used to denote the seventh-day Sabbath in every instance where that Sabbath is brought to view; and yet it may have a much wider signification, and be applied, in other places, to other objects.

The question to be decided is, Does the term *sabbaton* ever refer to the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews? If it does, then the apostle may have used it in that sense in Col.2:16; and the argument of Mr. Lee so far falls to the ground. We therefore refer the reader to Lev.16:31; 23:32; and 25:2,4,6, as found in the Septuagint, where he will see that the term *sabbaton* is used in reference to the day of atonement, one of the yearly sabbaths of the Jews, and is even applied to the seventh year in which the land should rest.

This is conclusive on this point. But there is in the New Testament evidence enough that the term *sabbaton* does not always mean the seventh-day Sabbath. Every lexicon tells us that it sometimes

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means the whole week, the interval from Sabbath to Sabbath; and Luke 18:12, furnishes an instance where it must have this signification.

So much for his argument on *sabbaton*. Let us now look for a moment at his other statement, that the remaining terms in Col.2:16, namely, the "holy day" and "new moon" include all other feasts and rests which might be called sabbaths, so that the term *sabbaton* is necessarily restricted to the seventh-day Sabbath. The term translated "holy day" is *heorte*, which is defined by Greenfield, a "solemn feast, public festival, holy day; specially spoken of the passover." Robinson adds, "Specially a) The passover, and the festival of unleavened bread connected with it, the paschal festival. b) The feast of tabernacles." The passover festival occupied seven days, and the feast of tabernacles, eight. The first and last days of these feasts were special days. In them the people were to have a holy convocation, and perform no servile work. They were sabbaths. The other days of the feast were simply holidays, and were designated by this term, *heorte*; while the solemnity and cessation from labor that pertained to the first and last days called for another title, and they were termed sabbaths. So Kitto says, respecting the feast of tabernacles, "It began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and

continued eight days, the first and last being sabbaths." The new moon, *noumenia*, was another kind of festival, and did not include any which could properly be called a sabbath; that is no day was a sabbath, or day of rest,

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on account of its being the festival of the new moon.

Thus we see that the term, "holy day" and "new moon" are not sufficient, as Mr. Lee asserts, to cover all the subjects which the apostle wished to introduce; namely, the ordinary feast days of the Jew, the new moons, and the sabbaths connected with their feasts; and these latter he designates by the word *sabbatone*, just as they were designated in the Greek version of the Old Testament then in use.

But there are other considerations which should have been sufficient to save Mr. Lee from so false a criticism upon this text:-

1. The sabbaths here mentioned are those associated with meats, drinks, new moons, and festivals. But the seventh-day Sabbath never was so associated.

2. The sabbaths here spoken of were, like the new moons and feasts with which they were connected, shadows of things to come. But the seventh-day Sabbath never was a shadow; it was instituted before the fall, when, from the very nature of the case, a type could not have existed. This language of the apostle, therefore, in the most emphatic manner, excludes the weekly Sabbath from the days of which he speaks.

3. All that is mentioned in verse 16 is included in the handwriting of ordinances of verse 14, which was against us, and which was blotted out and nailed to the cross. But the seventh-day Sabbath never was a part of these ordinances, as such.

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It owed its existence to enactments entirely distinct, not being written by the hand of Moses, but being proclaimed by the voice of God from the summit of Sinai, and engraved with his finger upon the tables of stone. And to speak of blotting out such a document would be to say that a person could, with pen and ink, erase the chiseled inscription of the marble monument. If Mr. Lee is correct, Paul did not write by inspiration of God; for that never thus bungles in the use of language.

The word *sabbatone* is in the plural, and should here be so rendered. If it was in the singular number, it might with propriety be claimed that it referred to the weekly Sabbath. But being plural, it may properly be so rendered; and the context, showing that it must refer to the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews, demands that the plural rendering be here given it. So if the word *days*, which our translators have supplied, be omitted, it should be rendered sabbaths. In this manner God speaks of the sabbaths of the Jewish church, when by the prophet Hosea (2:11) he calls them "her sabbaths," and predicts that they should cease, as Paul here declares that they had ceased. Robinson says *sabbaton*, in Col. 2:16, has a plural signification.

Mr. Lee's criticism thus fails in every particular; for, 1. The terms holy day (or feast day) and new moon do not cover the ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews. 2.

The term *sabbaton* is applied to those sabbaths, and is needed in this text to denote them. 3. The sabbaths of this text are associated with ceremonies. 4. They are shadows, or types. 5. They are blotted out. 6. The word is plural. All which considerations prove that the text has no reference whatever to the Sabbath of the moral law; and hence contains no evidence that we are not morally bound to observe it. U. S.

### Extract from Both Sides, pp. 114-119

ELD. T. M. PREBLE says; "Now it is evident that if the translators had just *transposed* the word *sabbaton*, in these *nine* cases just examined, as they did in the other *fifty-nine* instances already above referred to, then we should have had clear, blazing light shining on this glorious subject; and we should see that, *at the END of the seventh-day Sabbaths* - (or at the end of the Lord JEHOVAH'S Sabbaths - which he gave to the '*children of Israel*, to be a '*sign*' unto *them* ' throughout their generations') THERE *would be the BEGINNING of the LORD JESUS CHRIST'S SABBATHS*. Or, in other words, where one series of Sabbaths *ended*, there another series of Sabbaths *began*."

"If the translators had just '*transposed [transferred?]* the word *sabbaton*,' in nine cases where it is rendered week in the New Testament, 'then we *should* have had clear, blazing light shining on this glorious subject.' " So, then, the "clear blazing light" on the Sunday Sabbath lies in the fact that the word *sabbaton* is incorrectly translated week nine times in the New Testament! And Eld. P. takes it upon himself to correct the translation, and bring out the blazing light! We are glad the controversy is narrowed down to this point. If left here, it would soon be disposed of; for it will not take long to sweep this objection back into the depths of night from whence it sprung.

It is a fact that the word *sabbaton* is rendered week in the nine instances Eld. P. has referred to. Is this rendering correct? "For some cause *unknown to me*," says he, "the translators saw fit to render the word *sabbaton* by the word week in nine cases out of the whole number sixty-eight." The

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translators certainly had a reason for translating it as they have done; and we can tell Eld. P. how he might have "known" what it was. It is to be presumed that he possesses a copy of the common edition of Greenfield's Greek Testament. If he will look in the lexicon attached to the Testament, under the word *sabbaton*, he will find the third definition reading like this: "A period of seven days, a week." If this word in certain relations means week, it is certainly proper so to translate it. And one of the instances to which Eld. P. has referred, renders it necessary to good sense to give it this meaning: Luke 18:12: "I fast twice in the week" (*sabbaton*). Now if the word here means the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, and not the whole week, we have the singular spectacle of the old Pharisee claiming to fast twice in a day of twenty-four hours, which would be of course, between meals! Bloomfield, in his note on this place, says that this fast was on the second and fifth days of the *week*, according to Epiphanius and the

Rabbins. Robinson, under the word *sabbaton*, says, "2. Meton., a *sabbath*, put for the interval from Sabbath to Sabbath, hence a *se'nnight, week*."

From the foregoing it is evident that the word *sabbaton* sometimes means the whole week. How, then, shall we determine *when* it has this meaning? Easily enough. Robinson says that it has this meaning "after numerals denoting the days of the week." We now inquire, Does the word *sabbaton*, in those places where the expression, "first day of the week," occurs in the New Testament, follow a numeral adjective denoting the day of the week? We answer, Yes, *in every instance*. Then no one can deny, without discarding all authority, that in

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these instances *sabbaton* means week, and the translation of our common version is correct. The numeral adjective used in Matt.28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; 1Cor.16.2, is *mia* or *mian*; in Mark 16:9, *prote*. One instance will suffice for the whole, and we will take the first one, Matt.28:1. The words are *mian sabbaton* (pronounced with long o, as in tone). *Mian* is the numeral adjective meaning one, or according to a Hebraism, "first." It agrees with day, understood. *Sabbaton* is in the genitive plural, literally answering to the English words, "of the week." So we have, as plainly as language can say it, "first day of the week."

Eld. P. argues, however, that here the Lord Jehovah's Sabbaths ceased, and the Lord Jesus Christ's Sabbaths were introduced, or one series of Sabbaths there ended, and another series of Sabbaths there began. But this little shift in favor of Sunday, involves a fatal violation of grammar which he has apparently overlooked. If his rendering is correct, and first day of the week should be rendered, "one of sabbaths," meaning one if the new series of Sabbaths then introduced, then the word one, *mian*, must agree with *sabbaton* understood. But *sabbaton* is *neuter*, and *mian* is *feminine*. Grammar will not submit to any such treatment as this. The word *mian*, being in the feminine gender, shows that the noun understood, with which it agrees, is a feminine noun. And there is no word which can be introduced to supply the ellipsis, except the word which the translators of our Bible have supplied, namely *heemeran*, day, which renders the sense complete, and being a feminine noun answers to the feminine adjective, *mian*, and makes the construction harmonious and

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perfect. We accordingly find in the margin of the Greek Testament a reference from the word *mian*, saying "*Heemeran* understood." And we are forced to the conclusion that Greenfield, Robinson, and Liddell and Scott, in their lexicons, and the forty-seven learned men of England who made our version of the New Testament, are correct in their translation, and Eld. P. is wrong. Another conclusion is no less apparent, namely that this great "blaze" of "light," with which Eld. P. hoped to dazzle us from the Greek, has proved but another *ignis fatuus*, which, after leading its victim into inextricable bogs, has - *gone out!* U. S.

## The Sabbath Between

Some suppose that evidence is found in Acts 13:42, for Sunday-keeping. The text reads: "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." The margin says, "In the week between, or, in the Sabbath between." The word rendered "next" is *metaxu*, and is defined by Greenfield: "Between, Matt.23:35, etc.; *ho metaxu*, intervening time, *en to metaxu*, sc. *chrono*, in the meantime, meanwhile, John4:31; by turns, mutually, Rom.2:12; *ho metaxu*, subsequent, following, succeeding, next. Acts 13:42."

1. This is all the material with which they are furnished by this text. How do they manipulate it into proof for a first-day Sabbath? That the day in which Paul delivered the discourse of which this verse is a part, was the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, as stated in verse 14, is on all

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hands conceded. Now, granting that *metaxu* here means between (which is only one of its meanings), and that the request was that another meeting should be held on the Sabbath between, how does this prove that the first day of the week is here intended? The first day is not named; no day of the week is specified; and nothing is proved for the first day over any other of the days of the week.

2. The term *sabbaton* is applied in the New Testament to only three objects: 1st. The Sabbath proper, the last day of each week. 2nd. The space of time included between these Sabbaths, or the week. 3rd. The yearly or ceremonial sabbaths of the Jews. Our friends will not claim that Acts 13:42, refers to any ceremonial sabbath. They contend that it does not refer to the Sabbath upon the last day of the week, as observed by the Jews. It must, then, in this instance, mean the only other thing to which it is ever applied, namely, the space between, or the whole week, as the margin of our common version reads, "In the week between." But this would prove nothing for a first-day Sabbath.

3. If it means as is claimed, a Sabbath between, then we inquire, Between what? Between two seventh-day Sabbaths certainly: between that Sabbath on which Paul spoke and the next one like it. But what was there between these? There were six whole days of the week. And if one of these is a Sabbath between, who will tell us which one it is? This text neither tells nor intimates. It does not therefore look well for our friends to assume it too positively.

4. We inquire further, Who were the ones who made this request of Paul? Answer. The Gentiles.

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They were neither Jews nor Christians. They could not have been keeping the Sunday in honor of Christ's resurrection, or in any sense as a Christian institution; for they made no profession of the Christian religion. This is proof positive that their request had no reference to the observance of the first day as a Christian Sabbath.

5. For these reasons, *metaxu* cannot here have the meaning of between, but that of next, subsequent, next in order, following; and we do no violence to the language by giving it this definition; for it has this meaning equally with the other. So Dr. Bloomfield says: "The sense expressed in our common version is, no

doubt, the true one. It is adopted by the best recent commentators and confirmed by the ancient versions."

6. Having seen that there is no proof in verse 42 for a first-day Sabbath, we come now to verse 44, which forever annihilates the first-day claim by showing what day that next Sabbath was, namely, the next seventh day of the week. For we read: "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." This record shows how Paul complied with the request of those Gentiles, and so determines what that request was. They did not ask him to speak on one day, and he speak on another. No; this "next Sabbath" of verse 44, on which Paul spoke, was the "next Sabbath" of verse 42, on which they requested him to speak. And does any one say that this was the Sabbath between? Let us see if it was. It is claimed on verse 42 that it was the Sabbath between because the word *metaxu* is used, which, among others, has that meaning. Now if this had been what the writer of the Acts designed to teach, he would have used in verse 44, this same

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word *metaxu*, which sometimes means between; or, more probably, he would use some stronger word which *always* has this meaning. But so far from this, he uses a word which *never* has this meaning. The word used in this case is *erehomeno*, a participle from the verb *erehomai* which means primarily, to come. So here it is the coming or next Sabbath, and so far as we have been able to learn is uniformly so translated. So Bloomfield says that the supposition that verse 42 means some intermediate week day is refuted by verse 44.

But was not the envy of the Jews stirred, as mentioned in verse 45, because they saw a new Sabbath supplanting the one they had always observed? Nothing of this kind is stated. But it says that when they saw the *multitudes* they were filled with envy. They were envious that the preaching of the gospel should call forth such crowds, while their own worship excited comparatively little attention. It is truly surprising that any one should urge such an argument as this in proof of a change of the Sabbath.

It is not singular that first-day advocates should be anxious to dispose of this case; for, as it stands, it effectually cuts off the claim that Paul made use of the seventh day for the purpose of getting the ears of the Jews, inasmuch as this meeting on the Sabbath pertained wholly to the Gentiles. But they do their cause no service by the method of argument which they adopt. U. S

<sup>1</sup> In presenting these Greek words in English characters, we use such forms as will show the correct pronunciation.

<sup>2</sup> From this word comes the genitive plural *sabbatone*. The reader should carefully distinguish between *sabbaton* nominative and accusative singular, and *sabbatone* genitive plural.