

for the Sabbath!” That’s exactly what the **SDA** leaders want you to think! They want you to see Augustine as one who **stood up** for the Sabbath! “We’ve got a champion here!” But it’s all just a bunch of **nothing!** Augustine would be the **FIRST** to denounce **SDA** “Sabbath” teaching! Let’s hear what this “greatest theologian among the church fathers”¹ has to say:

- Well, now, I should like to be told what there is in these ten commandments, except the observance of the Sabbath, which ought not to be kept by a Christian.²
- The rest of the Sabbath is no longer binding as an observance, now that the hope of our eternal rest has been revealed.³
- ...signifieth the agreement of the two Testaments. For in the former is observed the Sabbath, which signifieth rest; in the latter the Lord’s Day, which signifieth resurrection. The Sabbath is the seventh day, but the Lord’s Day, coming after the seventh, must needs be the eighth, and is also to be reckoned the first. For it is called the first day of the week...⁴
- The people of the former dispensation, accepting this rest [the Sabbath] as a shadow of things to come, obeyed the command by such abstinence from work as we now see practiced by the Jews; not, as some suppose, through their being carnal, and misunderstanding what Christians rightly understand. Nor do we understand this law better than the prophets, who, at the time when this was still binding, observed such rest on the Sabbath as the Jews believe ought to be observed to this day.⁵
- It is also for this reason, that of all the ten commandments, that which related to the Sabbath was the only one in which the thing commanded was typical; the bodily rest enjoined being a type which we have received as a means of our instruction, but not as a duty binding also upon us...as to all the things enjoined in the other commandments, we are to yield to them an obedience in which there is nothing typical. For we have been taught literally not to worship idols; and the precepts enjoining us not to take God’s name in vain, to honour our father and mother, not to commit adultery, or kill, or steal, or bear false witness, or covet anything that is our neighbour’s, are all devoid of typical or mystical meaning, and are to be literally observed. But we are not commanded to observe the day of the Sabbath literally, in resting from bodily labour, as it is observed by the Jews...⁶
- For the Law was our “schoolmaster” in Christ. He therefore gave to men a schoolmaster to fear, who after gave a Master to love. And yet in these precepts and commands of the Law, which now it is not allowed Christians to use, such as either the Sabbath, or Circumcision, or Sacrifices...⁷
- When you ask why a Christian does not keep the Sabbath, if Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it, my reply is, that a Christian does not keep the Sabbath precisely because what was prefigured in the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ. For we have our Sabbath in Him, who said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”⁸

You see what I mean? The **SDA** leaders clearly use a **misleading** tactic when they bring Augustine (knowing what he believes!) into this sub-section, and set him forth as though he were a supporter of their Sabbath argument. They know better! But they’re hoping you don’t. Also, by doing this, they reveal the fact that they hardly have anything at all of any real substance to use, so whatever they can possibly grab, they do so!

2. SOCRATES & 3. SOZOMEN

The first pillar has toppled! Augustine is disqualified by his own writings! There’s four to go. The next two we’ll have to deal with together, because they’re like identical twins—**Socrates Scholasticus** and **Hermias Sozomen**. They’re both lawyers of the 5th century, both of Constantinople, both were inspired to write church history by **Eusebius (AD270-340)**, the “father of church history,” and both quotes from them that the **SDA** leaders use are taken from practically identical chapters on “Easter.” Writing about AD430, **Socrates**, in Book 5, has for a heading in chapter 22: “**The Celebration of Easter.**” Not long after this, **Sozomen**, in Book 7, writing in chapters 18 & 19, has this for a heading, “**The Easter Festivals.**” And throughout, they’re discussing the “feasts,” the “fasts,” and the “weeks” of “Easter.” This is where the **SDA** leaders take quotes from them—right in the middle of this “Easter” context. From **Socrates**: “Almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.” And from **Sozomen**: “The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.” (*Believe, p292*)

One would think that somewhere in all of history the **SDA** leaders could come up with (1) a “quote” that was as clear as crystal in support of their argument, (2) a “quote” about the very time period of which they speak, and (3) a “quote” from an author who is writing about the very time period of which they speak. If they could, they would for sure publish it for all to see in this most-important sub-section on **The Rise of Sunday Observance**. Let’s consider these three points:

(1) Both quotes are **lifted out** of a heavily saturated **Easter** context. Neither Socrates nor Sozomen give any explanation to clarify their statements. The precise meaning is left hanging. Socrates has been talking at length about the “weeks” of “Easter season.” Are we to understand his usage of “week” in that setting? He leaves us in the dark. These are **poor quotes** for this critical area of controversy, where these **SDA** leaders have set themselves virtually against the whole of Christianity. This will not convince the careful reader. If a quote is used to support a doctrine of this magnitude, it should be clear.

(2) These are “**fifth century**” historians. Just before quoting Socrates, the **SDA** leaders say: “From the second to the fifth centuries, while Sunday was rising in influence, Christians continued to observe the seventh-day Sabbath nearly everywhere throughout the Roman empire.” Right here, they let Socrates speak. Of what? the “**second to the fifth centuries**”? **No!** only **the fifth**, his day. Look at it carefully. See the problem? They’re trying to convince us of something that **they say** was happening “from the second to the fifth centuries,” but the **best quote** they can come up with is only talking about “**THE FIFTH**” century! They just couldn’t do any better.

(3) Neither Socrates nor Sozomen were writing about this time period—“the second to the fifth centuries.” Both of these men wrote their “histories” of the **fourth and fifth** centuries. Socrates’ writings covered AD306 to 439; Sozomen’s covered the period of AD323 to 423. Any serious student would ask the question—Why are they quoting historians whose “histories” don’t even cover the period of which they speak? It’s simple. The historian that did cover that era, they **refused** to quote!—**Eusebius**. He said: “They (the Jewish Christians) also observe the Sabbath, and other discipline of the Jews, just like them; but, on the other hand, they also celebrate the Lord’s Days very much like us in commemoration of his resurrection.”⁹ That’s **not** what they want you to hear! So they leave it out! They pass right over the testimony of this celebrated “father of church history.” Did you notice, though, how Eusebius, in speaking of the Jewish Christians, shed some real “light” on Sozomen’s statement about people “assembling together on the Sabbath, **as well as** on the first day of the week”?

I think it’s worth noting here that Sozomen **in this chapter** on Easter, in a way, cast a shadow of doubt on the statement by Socrates. He not only identifies “the Lord’s Day” two times—once as “the first day of the week,” and once as “the day of the resurrection” (which totally contradicts the **SDA**’s position on “the Lord’s Day!”)—but he further writes:

From that period Sabbatius adhered to the usage of the Jews; and unless all happened to observe the feast at the same time, he fasted, according to the custom, but in advance, and celebrated the Passover with the usual prescriptions by himself. He passed the Saturday, from the evening to the appointed time, in watching and in offering up the prescribed prayers; and on the following day he assembled with the multitude, and partook of the mysteries.

Looking at the quote by Socrates again, this is getting a little mixed-up. He’s saying it’s all happening “on the Sabbath,” yet Sozomen gives us evidence that it’s taking place on Sunday! And keep in mind, Sozomen said this **in the very context** where Socrates is writing, and where the **SDA** leaders “extract” their quote! Interesting, isn’t it? But, let’s move on, because as they say, we’ve “**got bigger fish to fry.**” So far, under this second head, we’ve just more or less been “dilly-dallying” around. It’s time now, though, to follow these **SDA** leaders, and lay all our cards on the table. There’s something better than quoting those who **WROTE history**, quote those who **MADE history!** I say, open the gate, and let ‘em set the record straight!

AD60, Luke, “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...” (*Acts 20:7*)

AD95, John, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (*Rev 1:10*)

107, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and pupil of the Apostle John: “Let us no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner...Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day...the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days”¹⁰

120, The Didache, (*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*), “Every Lord’s Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving after having confessed your transgressions” (*chp 14*)

120, Barnabas, “We keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead” (*Epistle, chp15*)

140, Justin Martyr, “Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly,” (*First Apology, chp67*)

170, Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth: “Today we kept the Lord’s Day holy, in which we read your letter”¹¹

180, Bardesanes of Edessa, Syria: “On one day, which is the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together”¹²

180, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and pupil of the eminent **Polycarp (AD69-155)**, Bishop of Smyrna, who himself was a pupil of the Apostle John—“The mystery of the Lord’s resurrection may not be celebrated on any other day than the Lord’s Day” (*Walter Martin, Kingdom of the Cults, Bethany, 1977, p396*)

194, Clement of Alexandria: “He...according to the Gospel, keeps the Lord’s Day, when he abandons an evil disposition... glorifying the Lord’s resurrection in himself” (*Miscellanies, VI, 12*)

200, Tertullian of Africa: “We have nothing to do with Sabbaths...We have our own solemnities, the Lord’s Day...”¹³

225, Origen of Egypt: “...we...observe certain days, as for example, the Lord’s Day...” (*Origen Against Celsus, Book 8, 22*)

250, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage: “...the eighth day, that is, the first day after the Sabbath, the Lord’s Day...” (*Epistle 58, 4*)

250, Constitutions of the Holy Apostles: “He...rose again at break of day on the Lord’s Day” (*Book 5, Sec. 3, 19*)

270, Anatolius, Bishop of Laodicea: “...the Lord’s Day, on which the resurrection of the Lord from death took place” (*chp10*)

300, Peter, Bishop of Alexandria: “The Lord’s Day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it, He rose again” (*Canon15*)

300, Victorinus of Austria: “...on the Lord’s Day we go forth to our bread with giving of thanks” (*Creation of the World, par 4*)

The celebration of the Lord’s Day in memory of the resurrection of Christ dates undoubtedly from the apostolic age. Nothing short of **apostolic precedent** can account for the universal religious observance in the churches of the second century. **There is no dissenting voice**. This is confirmed by the testimonies of the earliest post-apostolic writers...The observance of the Sabbath among the Jewish Christians gradually ceased.¹⁴

And lest we forget the three towering **Giants** of Socrates’ and Sozomen’s **very own day!**—**Augustine (354-430)**, **Jerome (340-419)**, and **Chrysostom (347-407)**. They represented the Church in both the East and the West. We know well what Augustine believed. Jerome, “one of the most learned and able among the fathers of the Western Church,” John Chrysostom, “the greatest expositor and preacher of the Greek Church”—both of these men testify in their writings that “the first day of the week” is “**the Lord’s Day**” (*see Jerome, Vol. 6, Against Vigilantius, 13; and Chrysostom, Vol. 12, Homily 43*). We echo the words of Philip Schaff again, “**There is no dissenting voice!**” amongst these Church Fathers—all blend together in one harmonious note, **all** say the same thing, **all** testify to the same truth—that the day on which the Lord arose was **the Lord’s Day**, specially dedicated to him by the early church! **Why** do these **SDA** leaders run all the way over to the 5th century? **Why** do they pay no attention to all this valuable testimony from these heroes of the faith, who made history, and told it like it was? You can answer that!

4. CONSTANTINE

Two more pillars have crumbled! The “weight” of history has brought them down! Two supports remain. If there was ever a bigger name than “Ellen G. White” in the **SDA** camp, this is it! — **CONSTANTINE!** This is the big, bad wolf! They want everybody to know what a “bad” thing he did in **AD321**. They had to blame it on somebody! Every time I look at him in that “Lord’s Day” tract of theirs,¹⁵ I just get the “willies!” He’s ferocious!—sealing that decree with his insignia, and all. When they try to convince you that “*the Sabbath was changed to Sunday*” somewhere in the “*fourth century*,” they point to this guy first—the main culprit! He passed this horrible law:

On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits. (*Believe*, p293)

Under their famous drawing of Constantine sealing this edict in their “Lord’s Day” tract, they say he “**demanding Sunday observance**” here. I must have read this law at least 15 times now, but I still can’t find the part about “Sabbath observance” ceasing and “Sunday observance” being mandated. If you ask me, listening to someone argue that the Sabbath was **changed** to Sunday in the fourth century—why, that’s like listening to someone insist that the earth is flat! The proof, the facts, the evidence—it’s all there! The earth is round! No theory. It’s an understood truth. And when we affirm that “the first day of the week” was established in the Christian Church as “the Lord’s Day” and universally observed from the days of the apostles—we’re *not presuming*. The evidence is there. It’s real. This is not guesswork. It’s an established fact of history—documented over, and over, and over again by the Church Fathers! The quotes that I listed previously are just a fragment of what could be listed if I wanted to take the space. **Sunday** as “**the day of worship**” was observed by the early church for **300 years prior to Constantine!** You can believe the earth is flat all you want; it’s not going to change our planet. And you can believe Constantine changed the Sabbath to Sunday all you want; it’s not going to change the truth and reality of history!

Why do you think there’s **no quote** from the early Church Fathers in all of their *Questions* book, and in all of their *Believe* book? That’s right. Not one! In over **1000 pages**, they cannot give you one single “quote” from these men. Why? because all of history is against them! And they know it! So the **SDA** leaders just turn a blind eye to all of it, and become mute; and by doing this they keep all of this valuable evidence entirely **hidden** from you. And then they start making up “**stories**” to try to convince you that they’re right; and this edict by this Roman emperor is at the top of the list. But they know, if you knew anything at all about history, they’d never get away with it. So they’re “hush-hush” about all that. This story of theirs, though, is pretty outlandish. It’s similar to starting a rumor in the United States that the annual Fourth of July celebration was started by the Russians! and coming up with a few stories

to pawn it off. Now, there **are** those living there that you could convince of that; but you’re not going to sell that story to a true American, born and raised on that soil. They know too much about the “history” of that country. And that’s precisely the one area that the one spreading such a ridiculous rumor would be sure to stay clear of—“American History” books! He’d be foiled every time! So his approach with people would always be with his “**stories**.” Constantine changing the Sabbath to Sunday is a “**story**.” The **SDA** leaders stay clear of “Church History” in the early centuries *on purpose*; they know where their best hope lies—in peddling their “stories.”

Let’s talk about it briefly. Constantine was favorable toward Christianity. His parents were Christians. He saw his best interest lie in favoring this new and rising religion. The old pagan religion was falling before them. Christians from the days of the apostles had kept the first day of the week; but there was no civil law to protect or aid them in it. By this time they had become very numerous in the empire, and their influence was rapidly gaining. Thus, as soon as he publicly professed Christianity, he issued several edicts favoring it in various ways. The *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* well says:

He was no doubt convinced of the superior claims of Christianity as the rising religion; but his conversion was a change of policy, rather than of moral character.... He knew Christianity well, but only as a power in the Roman Empire, and he protected it as a wise and far-seeing statesman.... His first edict concerning the Christians (Rome, 312) is lost. By the second (Milan, 313) he granted them, not only free religious worship and the recognition of the state, but also reparation of previously incurred losses.... A series of edicts of 315, 316, 319, 321, and 323, completed the revolution. Christians were admitted to the offices of the state.... An edict of 321 ordered Sunday to be celebrated by cessation of all work in public.

The **SDA** leaders portray this “Sunday law” as though it were **THE GREAT FORCE** behind the Christians of the fourth century worshipping on “Sunday” on a widespread scale. In *Questions*, they tell us that as a **result** of Constantine passing this law—“the Sunday festival **became increasingly popular and widespread**” (p142). What they’re putting in your mind by statements like this is that Christians were faithfully keeping “**the Sabbath**” up to this time, but now, this sun-worshipping Roman emperor has “**changed**” all that—they now have to keep “**Sun-day!**” That’s what they want you to believe. This is one of their “stories.” Just prior to bringing Constantine into the picture, **Ellen G. White** makes this silly statement in her acclaimed and “inspired” masterpiece, *Great Controversy*—“**In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians**” (p21).¹⁶ Then who comes on the scene?—the big, bad Constantine! You see what I mean? The truth is, this law made **no change** in the observance of Sunday by Christians; but it did secure to that day **a better observance** by requiring everyone, pagans and all, to cease work on that day. Many Christians were slaves to pagan masters, and did not enjoy **freedom of worship**. This was due to the fact that Sunday was a common working day. Constantine changed all that.

5. THE COUNCIL OF LAODICEA

The fourth pillar has fallen! Constantine turned out to be just another “story.” All the **bad** news they were propagating about him turned out to be **good**. There is but one remaining column to hold up this tottering **SDA** “house of cards”—the **Council of Laodicea** (AD364). Here’s that dreadful decree:

Christians ought not to Judaize and to rest in the Sabbath, but to work in that day; but preferring the Lord’s Day, should rest, if possible, as Christians. Wherefore if they shall be found to Judaize, let them be accursed from Christ. (*Canon 29*)

As with Constantine, the **SDA** leaders want you to see in this decree a “**change**” from the Sabbath to Sunday. After speaking of this council, they refer to Sunday as “**the papal substitute**,” and say, “We... deny the validity of such a **change of the Sabbath** as claimed by **Roman Catholics**...” (*Questions*, p145). But again, this is just a “**story**.” They’re putting these “Catholic” thoughts in your mind—even erroneously calling this council a “**Roman Catholic one**” (*Believe*, p293). It was nothing of the kind! Laodicea is in Asia Minor, over 1,000 miles from Rome; it is a Greek city, not a Roman city; Eastern, not Western. The Roman Catholic Church had nothing to do with it, as it was only a “local” council, a small affair, and not a “general” council. Liberius, who was bishop of Rome at this time, was degraded from office, banished, and treated with contempt.¹⁷ The fact is—this council simply **regulated in this locality** an already long established institution, “**the Lord’s Day**,” just the same as council after council did afterwards.

Don’t be deceived by all this **SDA** “talk” about the Sabbath being “changed” in the fourth century! It’s ridiculous! This Laodicean Council was **AD364**. A **whole century earlier**, we have clear testimony that **this church** was keeping **Sunday**—Anatolius, **Bishop of LAODICEA**, spoke often in his writings of “the Lord’s Day.” For example, in 17 brief canons he wrote, he mentions it **12 times!** —“Our regard for the Lord’s resurrection, which took place on the Lord’s Day, will lead us to celebrate it on the same principle” (*Canon 16*). **One hundred years before the Council of Laodicea!** —**AD270!**

That **SDA** “HOUSE OF CARDS” just collapsed! Their whole section on “*The Rise of Sunday Observance*” is nothing but one “story” upon another! **One Big Fairy Tale!**

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This is only one amongst many of our “bellicose” SDA tracts!

A “HOUSE OF CARDS”

“The Rise of Sunday Observance”

by Seventh-day Adventists

The two most important doctrinal books of the **Seventh-day Adventists (SDA)** are “Questions on Doctrine” (*Questions*) and “Seventh-day Adventists Believe” (*Believe*). In both of these in the chapter on “The Sabbath” there is a sub-section on “*The Rise of Sunday Observance*”—*Questions* (p141, 2003 ed.), *Believe* (p292, 2006 ed.). In this brief sub-section, I see five “pillars” the **SDA** leaders have erected to support their theory of Sabbath observance in the early church, which they say, was “eclipsed gradually” by Sunday observance. As you read through the section, you come across these five pillars: (1) Augustine, (2) Socrates, (3) Sozomen, (4) Constantine (5) the Council of Laodicea. What they have set up under this heading with these five supports can be likened unto a structure built of playing cards. There’s no way it can stand up under careful examination. The records of history are too easily accessible today—it will collapse. We intend to show how unstable their whole position really is, and how it’s just as liable to fall as any “house of cards” that was ever built.

1. AUGUSTINE

Augustine (AD354-430), bishop of Hippo, is the first pillar the **SDA** leaders set forth to sustain their argument—*Questions* (p141). It must be something of importance they have to say about him, for they give him an entire paragraph in this brief section. But reading the paragraph, if you think about it at all, you can’t help but say to yourself, “**So what!**” Nothing is said about **worship** or Christians **assembling together** at all. Their whole point is that some churches “**fasted** on the seventh day of each week,” but others, they say, “**had too much respect for the Sabbath** to do that.” That’s it!—**fasting!** And they try to set up Augustine, this eminent church father, as one who had so much “**respect**” and “**esteem**” for the Sabbath that the churches under his care “**did not follow this practice**,” that of “**fasting on the seventh day**.” Now, that’s monumental!

This is a prime example of what religious leaders do when they have **little-to-nothing** of value that will support their theory. They search for anything they can use, regardless of how remote it may be in relation to their case. And it’s a “**big plus**” for them whenever they can attach a “**big name**” to it! Augustine **is** that big name! They themselves call him “one of the most influential church fathers” (*Believe*, p184). This was a “big catch” for them. But does it have anything to do with the churches assembling together for worship on a stated day? Absolutely not! **SDA** readers, though, will view this as a good point—“See, here’s a great church father who has great respect