

Question: What is the history of standing prayer in our world and church and when did it first appear in the (so called christian church)?

The Complete Testimony Of The Fathers.

J N Andrews 1873

pg 31-32 and 4 paragraph 4

But it seems that Tertullian by the eighth day intended Sunday. And here is something from him relative to the manner of keeping it. Thus he says:—

“In the matter of *kneeling* also, prayer is subject to diversity of observance, through the act of some few who abstain from kneeling on the Sabbath; and since this dissension is particularly on its trial before the churches, the Lord will give his grace that the dissentients may either yield, or else indulge their opinion without offense to others. We, however, (just as we have received), only on the day of the Lord’s resurrection, ought to guard not only against kneeling, but every posture and office of solicitude; deferring even our businesses, lest we give any place to the devil. Similarly, too, in the period of Pentecost; which period we distinguish by the same solemnity of exultation. But who would hesitate every day to prostrate himself before God, at least in the first prayer with which we enter on the daylight.”—*On Prayer*, chap.xxiii.

A more literal translation of this passage would expressly connect the term Lord’s day with the day of Christ’s resurrection, the original being “die dominico resurrexionis.” The special weekly honor which Tertullian would have men confer solely upon Sunday was to pray on that day in a *standing* posture. And somewhat to his annoyance, “some few” would thus act with reference to the Sabbath. There is, however, some reference to the deferral of business on Sunday. And this is worthy of notice, for it is the first sentence we have discovered that looks like abstinence from labor on Sunday, and we shall not find another before the time of Constantine’s famous Sunday law, A. D. 321.

But this passage is far from asserting that labor on Sunday was sinful. It speaks of “deferring even our business;” but this does not necessarily imply anything beyond its postponement during the hours devoted to religious services. And we shall find nothing in Tertullian, nor in his contemporaries, that will go beyond this, while we shall find much to restrict us to the interpretation of his words here given. Tertullian could not say that Sabbaths were strange to him and his brethren if they religiously refrained from labor on each Sunday. But let us hear him again concerning the observance of Sunday and kindred practices:—

“We take also in meetings before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, ***the sacrament of the Eucharist***, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal times, and enjoined to be taken by all [alike]. As often as the anniversary comes round, we make offerings for the dead as birth-day honors. ***We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord’s day to be unlawful.*** We rejoice in the same privilege also from Easter to Whitsunday. We feel pained should any wine or bread, even though our own, be cast upon the ground. At every forward step and movement, at every going in and out, when we put on our clothes and shoes, when we bathe, when sit at table, when we light the lamps, on couch, on seat, in all the ordinary actions of daily life, ***we trace upon the forehead the sign*** [of the cross].

“If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom, as their strengthener, and faith, as their observer. That reason will support tradition, and custom, and faith, you will either yourself perceive, or learn from some one who has.”—*De Corona*, Sects. 3 and 4. (Bold Italic Mine)

Answer: 200 A.D. Before that it was a HEATHEN PRACTICE!!! Notice this next statement.

HISTORY
OF
THE SABBATH
AND
THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

J. N. ANDREWS

1873

Irenaeus taught that to commemorate the resurrection, the knee must not be bent on that day, and mentions nothing else as essential to its honor. This act of standing in prayer was a symbol of the resurrection, which was to be celebrated only on that day, as he held. *Lost Writings of Irenaeus, Fragments 7 and 50.*

Tertullian, at different periods of his life, held different views respecting the Sabbath, and committed them all to writing. We last quoted from him a decisive testimony to the perpetuity of the Sabbath, coupled with an equally decisive testimony against the sanctification of the first day of the week. In another work, from which we have already quoted his statement that Christians should not kneel on Sunday, we find another statement that "some few" abstained from kneeling on the Sabbath. This has probable reference to Carthage, where Tertullian lived. He speaks thus:-

"In the matter of kneeling also, prayer is subject to diversity of observance, through the act of some few who abstain from kneeling on the Sabbath; and since this dissension is particularly on its trial before the churches, the Lord will give his grace that the dissentients may either yield, or else indulge their opinion without offense to others." *Tertullian on Prayer, chap. xxiii.*

The act of standing in prayer was one of the chief honors conferred upon Sunday. Those who refrained from kneeling on the seventh day, without doubt did it because they desired to honor that day. This particular act is of no consequence; for it was adopted in imitation of those who, from tradition and custom, thus honored Sunday; but we have in this an undoubted reference to Sabbath-keeping Christians. Tertullian speaks of them, however, in a manner quite unlike that of Justin in his reference to the commandment-keepers of his time.

Neander's Church History, translated by H. J. Rose, p. 186. To break the force of this strong statement of Neander that "the festival of Sunday, like all other festivals, was always only a human ordinance, and it was far from the intentions of the apostles to establish a divine command in this respect, far from them, and from the early apostolic church, to transfer the laws of the Sabbath to Sunday," two things have been said:-

(1). That Neander, in a later edition of his work, retracted this declaration. It is true that in re-writing his work he omitted this sentence. But he inserted nothing of a contrary character, and the general tenor of the revised edition is in this place precisely the same as in that from which

this out-spoken statement is taken.

In proof of this, we cite from the later edition of Neander his statement in this very place of what constituted Sunday observance in the early church. He says:-

"Sunday was distinguished as a day of joy, by being exempted from fasts, and by the circumstance that prayer was performed on this day in a standing and not in a kneeling posture, as Christ, by his resurrection, had raised up fallen man again to Heaven." -*Torrey's Neander, vol. i. p. 295, ed. 1852.*

This is an accurate account of early Sunday observance, as we shall hereafter show; and that such observance was only a human ordinance, of which no feature was ever commanded by the apostles, will be very manifest to every person who attempts to find any precept for any particular of it in the New Testament.

(2). But the other method of setting aside this testimony of Neander is to assert that he did not mean to deny that the apostles established a divine command for Sunday as the Christian Sabbath, but meant to assert that they did not establish a divine command for Sunday as a Catholic festival! Those who make this assertion must know that it is false. Neander expressly denies that the apostles either constituted or recognized Sunday as a Sabbath, and he represents Sunday as a mere festival from the very first of its observance, and established only by human authority.

The act of standing in prayer was one of the chief honors conferred upon Sunday. Those who refrained from kneeling on the seventh day, without doubt did it because they desired to honor that day. This particular act is of no consequence; for it was adopted in imitation of those who, from tradition and custom, thus honored Sunday; but we have in this an undoubted reference to Sabbath-keeping Christians. Tertullian speaks of them, however, in a manner quite unlike that of Justin in his reference to the commandment-keepers of his time. H.S. Chp. xviii.

The following are all the hints respecting the nature of first-day observance during the first three centuries. The epistle falsely ascribed to Barnabas simply says: "We keep the eighth day with joyfulness." *586 Justin Martyr, in words already quoted at full length, describes the kind of meeting which they held at Rome and in that vicinity on that day, and this is all that he connects with its observance. *587 Irenaeus taught that to commemorate the resurrection, the knee must not be bent on that day, and mentions nothing else as essential to its honor. ***This act of standing in prayer was a symbol of the resurrection,*** which was to be celebrated only on that day, as he held. *588 Bardesanes the Gnostic represents the Christians as everywhere meeting for worship on that day, but he does not describe that worship, and he gives no other honor to the day. *589 Tertullian describes Sunday observance as follows: "We devote Sunday to rejoicing," and he adds, "We have some resemblance to those of you who devote the day of Saturn to ease and luxury." *590 In another work he gives us a further idea of the festive character of Sunday. Thus he says to his brethren: "If any indulgence is to be granted to the flesh, you have it. I will not say your own days, but more too; for to the heathens each festive day occurs but once annually; you have a festive day every eighth day." H.S. Chp. xvii.

We hope that our brethren will not manifest less reverence and awe as they approach the

only true and living God than the heathen manifest for their idol deities, or these people will be our judges in the day of final decision. I would speak to all who occupy the place of teachers in our schools. Men and women, do not dishonor God by your irreverence and pomposity. Do not ***stand up*** in your Pharisaism and offer your prayers to God. Mistrust your own strength. Depend not in it; but often ***bow down on your knees before God, and worship Him.*** {2SM 314.1}(Bold Italics Mine) Read the whole Chapter!!!

“We do not obtain ***a hundredth part of the blessing we should*** obtain from assembling together to worship God. . . . As you enter the place of worship, ask the Lord to remove all evil from your heart. . . . Kneel before God in His temple.” {6T 362.3,4}

“There has been ***a great change, not for the better, but for the worse, in the habits and customs of the people in reference to religious worship.*** . . . When the meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in the presence of the holy one.” 5T 491-500.

“Where have our brethren obtained the idea ***that they should stand upon their feet*** when praying to God? . . . Both in public and private worship, it is our duty to bow down, when we offer our petitions to Him. This act shows our dependence upon Him. . . .

“ Is it possible that with all the light that God has given to His people on the ***subject of reverence,*** that ministers, principals, and teachers. . . . by precept and example, teach young men to stand erect in devotion as did the Pharisees? . . .

“Men and women, do not dishonor God by your irreverence and pomposity. ***Do not stand up*** in your Pharisaism and offer your prayers to God. M.S. 84B-1887. (Printed in note-book leaflets. Can still be purchased.)

NOTE: How apostasy works!

Testimony of the Early Fathers

J N Andrews

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5. And now mark the work of apostasy: This work never begins by thrusting out God’s institutions, but always by bringing in those of men and at first only asking that they may be tolerated, while yet the ones ordained of God are sacredly observed. This, in time, being effected, the next effort is to make them equal with the divine. When this has been accomplished, the third stage of the process is to honor them above those divinely commanded; and this is speedily succeeded by the fourth, in which the divine institution is thrust out with contempt, and the whole ground given to its human rival.

A Refutation Of The Claims Of Sunday-Keeping

J N Andrews

Pg 20 Paragraphs 5, 6.

By such means as these, the observance of the first day was gradually forced upon the people wherever they owed allegiance to the Pope as head of the church, and the Sabbath was as gradually brought into contempt and disuse.

The process by which the change was effected appears to be this: By first obtaining an annual

celebration of the first day at the close of Passover, in honor of the resurrection; then a partial observance of the day weekly, it being generally so observed among the heathen; then obtaining for it the support of civil laws, ecclesiastical canon and penalties, and by giving it the title of Lord's day; then by requiring the consecration of the entire day. To abate and ultimately eradicate all respect for the Sabbath, it was first turned into a fast; then it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, resting upon it was stigmatized as Judaism and heresy, and the preaching of it was called Antichrist; and finally the fourth commandment was pronounced ceremonial, and was effectually abstracted from the Decalogue. And thus, so far as the Roman church was concerned, the point was gained; and thus, probably, she performed her part in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel, (vii, 25,) "He shall think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

Both can be obtained at http://sdapillars.org/j_n_andrews.php

Note: Examples of positions in prayer from the Old Testament & Apostolic Church.

2SM Chp 32 pg 311-16

I have received letters questioning me in regard to the proper attitude to be taken by a person offering prayer to the Sovereign of the universe. Where have our brethren obtained the idea that they should stand upon their feet when praying to God? One who has been educated for about five years in Battle Creek was asked to lead in prayer before Sister White should speak to the people. But as I beheld him standing upright upon his feet while his lips were about to open in prayer to God, my soul was stirred within me to give him an open rebuke. Calling him by name, I said, "**Get down upon your knees.**" **This is the proper position always.**

"And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and **kneeled down**, and prayed" (Luke 22:41).

"Peter put them all forth, and **kneeled down**, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up" (Acts 9:40). {2SM 311.3}

"They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he **kneeled down**, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:59, 60).

"When he had thus spoken, he **kneeled down**, and prayed with them all" (Acts 20:36).

"When we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we **kneeled down** on the shore, and prayed" (Acts 21:5).

"At the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon **my knees**, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra 9:5, 6).

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us **kneel before** the Lord our maker" (Ps. 95:6).

"For this cause I bow *my knees* unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:14). And this whole chapter will, if the heart is receptive, be as precious a lesson as we can learn.

To bow down when in prayer to God is the proper attitude to occupy. This act of worship was required of the three Hebrew captives in Babylon. . . . But such an act was homage to be rendered to God alone--the Sovereign of the world, the Ruler of the universe; and these three Hebrews refused to give such honor to any idol even though composed of pure gold. In doing so, they would, to all intents and purposes, be bowing to the king of Babylon. Refusing to do as the king had commanded, they suffered the penalty, and were cast into the burning fiery furnace. But Christ came in person and walked with them through the fire, and they received no harm.

Both in public and private worship it is our duty to bow down upon our knees before God when we offer our petitions to Him. This act shows our dependence upon God.

At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon stood facing the altar. In the court of the Temple was a brazen scaffold or platform, and after ascending this, he stood and lifted up his hands to heaven, and blessed the immense congregation of Israel, and all the congregation of Israel stood. . . .

"For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and *kneeled down upon his knees* before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven" (2 Chron. 6:13).

The lengthy prayer which he then offered was appropriate for the occasion. It was inspired of God, breathing the sentiments of the loftiest piety blended with the deepest humility.

Note: How many attended?

A Growing Laxness

I present these proof texts with the inquiry, "Where did Brother H obtain his education?"--At Battle Creek. Is it possible that with all the light that God has given to His people on the subject of reverence, that ministers, principals, and teachers in our schools, by precept and example, teach young men to *stand erect in devotion* as did the Pharisees? Shall we look upon this as significant of their self-sufficiency and self-importance? Are these traits to become conspicuous?

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (Luke 18:9-12). Mark you, it was the self-righteous Pharisee who was not in a position of humility and reverence before God; but standing in his haughty self-sufficiency, he told the Lord all his good deeds. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself" (Luke 18: 11); and his prayer reached no higher than himself.

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but

smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:13, 14).

We hope that our brethren will not manifest less reverence and awe as they approach the only true and living God than the heathen manifest for their idol deities, or these people will be our judges in the day of final decision. I would speak to all who occupy the place of teachers in our schools. ***Men and women, do not dishonor God by your irreverence and pomposity. Do not stand up in your Pharisaism and offer your prayers to God. Mistrust your own strength. Depend not in it; but often bow down on your knees before God, and worship Him.***

On Bended Knee

And when you assemble to worship God, be sure and bow your knees before Him. Let this act testify that the whole soul, body, and spirit are in subjection to the Spirit of truth. Who have searched the Word closely for examples and direction in this respect? Whom can we trust as teachers in our schools in America and foreign countries? After years of study shall students return to their own country ***with perverted ideas of the respect and honor and reverence that should be given to God***, and feel under no obligation to honor the men of gray hairs, the men of experience, the chosen servants of God who have been connected with the work of God through almost all the years of their life? I advise all who attend the schools in America or in any other place, do not catch the spirit of ***irreverence***. Be sure you understand for yourself what kind of education you need, that you may educate others to obtain a fitness of character that will stand the test that is soon to be brought upon all who live upon the earth. Keep company with the soundest Christians. Choose not the pretentious instructors or pupils, but those who show the deepest piety, those who have a spirit of intelligence in the things of God.

We are living in perilous times. ***Seventh-day Adventists are professedly the commandment-keeping people of God; but they are losing their devotional spirit. This spirit of reverence for God teaches men how to approach their Maker--with sacredness and awe through faith, not in themselves, but in a Mediator. Thus man is kept fast, under whatever circumstances he is placed. Man must come on bended knee, as a subject of grace, a suppliant at the footstool of mercy.*** And as he receives daily mercies at the hand of God, he is ever to cherish gratitude in his heart, and give expression to it in the words of thanksgiving and praise for these unmerited favors. Angels have been guarding his pathway through all his life, and many of the snares he has been delivered from he has not seen. And for this guardianship and watchcare by eyes that never slumber and never sleep, he is to recognize in every prayer the service of God for him.

All should lean upon God in their helplessness and daily necessity. They should keep humble, watchful, and prayerful. Praise and thanksgiving should flow forth in gratitude and sincere love for God.

In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation should they praise the Most High God. All who have a sense of their vital connection with God should stand before the Lord as

witnesses for Him, giving expression of the love, the mercies, and the goodness of God. Let the words be sincere, simple, earnest, intelligent, the heart burning with the love of God, the lips sanctified to His glory not only to make known the mercies of God in the assembly of the saints but to be His witnesses in every place. The inhabitants of the earth are to know that He is God, the only true and living God.

There should be an intelligent knowledge of how to come to God in reverence and Godly fear with devotional love. There is a growing lack of reverence for our Maker, a growing disregard of His greatness and His majesty. But God is speaking to us in these last days. We hear His voice in the storm, in the rolling thunder. We hear of the calamities He permits in the earthquakes, the breaking forth of waters, and the destructive elements sweeping all before them. We hear of ships going down in the tempestuous ocean. God speaks to families who have refused to recognize Him, sometimes in the whirlwind and storm, sometimes face to face as He talked with Moses. Again He whispers His love to the little trusting child and to the gray-haired sire in his dotage. And earthly wisdom has a wisdom as it beholds the unseen.

When the still small voice which succeeds the whirlwind and the tempest that moves the rocks out of position, is heard, let all cover their face, for God is very near. Let them hide themselves in Jesus Christ; for He is their hiding place. The cleft in the rock is hidden with His own pierced hand while the humble seeker waits in bowed attitude to hear what saith the Lord unto His servant.--Manuscript 84b, 1897.

No Place Inappropriate for Prayer

There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God.... In the crowds of the street, in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God, and plead for divine guidance, as did Nehemiah when he made his request before King Artaxerxes --Steps to Christ (Pocket ed.), p. 99.

We may speak with Jesus as we walk by the way, and He says, I am at thy right hand. We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart's desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.--Gospel Workers, p. 258.

It is not always necessary to bow upon your knees in order to pray. Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor.--The Ministry of Healing, pp. 510, 511.

Note: Special circumstances for standing Prayer. Also the footnotes in this section are not authoritative, but simply the opinions from the compilers of the book. These comments do not reflect the above principles stated by God through EG White.

3SM pg 267-70

Not Always Necessary to Bow.--It is not always necessary to bow upon your knees in order

to pray. Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour *when you are alone*, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor.--The Ministry of Healing, pp. 510, 511.

Congregation Kneels After Standing in Consecration.-- The Spirit of the Lord rested upon me, and was revealed in the words that were given me to speak. I asked those present who felt the urgency of the Spirit of God, and who were willing to *pledge themselves* to live the truth and to teach the truth to others, and to work for their salvation, to make it manifest by rising to their feet. I was surprised to see the whole congregation rise. I then asked all to kneel down, and I sent up my petition to heaven for that people. I was deeply impressed by this experience. I felt the deep moving of the Spirit of God upon me, and I know that the Lord gave me a special message for His people at this time.--The Review and Herald, March 11, 1909.

Crowded Congregation in Europe Remained Seated.--I invited those who desired the prayers of the servants of God to come forward. All who had been backslidden, all who wished to return to the Lord and seek Him diligently, could improve the opportunity. Several seats were quickly filled and *the whole congregation was on the move*. We told them the best they could do was to be seated right where they were and we would all seek the Lord together by confessing our sins, and the Lord had pledged His word, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).-- Diary, Feb. 20, 1887. (Published in Selected Messages, book 1, p. 147.)

Congregation Rises to Feet for Consecration Prayer.--I invited all who wanted to give themselves to God in a sacred covenant, and to serve Him with their whole hearts, to rise to their feet. *The house was full*, and nearly all rose. Quite a number not of our faith were present, and some of these arose. I presented them to the Lord in earnest prayer, and we know that we had the manifestation of the Spirit of God. We felt that a victory had indeed been gained.--Manuscript 30a, 1896. (Published in Selected Messages, book 1, p. 150.)

Congregation Kneels for Consecration Prayer.--At the close of my discourse, I felt impressed by the Spirit of God to extend an invitation for all those to come forward who desired to give themselves fully to the Lord. Those who felt the need of the prayers of the servants of God were invited to make it manifest. About thirty came forward. . . .

At first I had hesitated, wondering if it were best to do so when my son and I were the only ones whom I could see who would give us any help on that occasion. But as though someone had spoken to me, the thought passed through my mind, "Cannot you trust in the Lord?" I said, "I will, Lord." Although my son was much surprised that I should make such a call on this occasion, he was equal to the emergency. I never heard him speak with greater power or deeper feeling than at that time. . . .

We knelt in prayer. My son took the lead, and the Lord surely indited his petition; for he seemed to pray as though in the presence of God.-The Review and Herald, July 30, 1895. (Republished in Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 148, 149.)

At a Workers Institute in Oakland, California.-- Now we ask you to seek the Lord with all the heart. Will those who are determined to cut loose from every temptation of the enemy, and to seek for heaven above, *signify such determination by rising to their feet*. [Nearly all of the congregation present responded.]

We desire that every one of you shall be saved. We desire that for you the gates of the city

of God shall swing back on their glittering hinges, and that you, with all the nations who have kept the truth, may enter in. There we shall give praise and thanksgiving and glory to Christ and to the Father evermore, even forever and ever. May God help us to be faithful in His service during the conflict, and overcome at last, and win the crown of life eternal.

[Praying] My heavenly Father, I come to Thee at this time, just as I am, poor and needy, and dependent upon Thee. I ask Thee to give me and give this people the grace that perfects Christian character, et cetera.--The Review and Herald, July 16, 1908.

Ellen White and Audience Standing for Consecration Prayer.--Who now, I ask, will make a determined effort to obtain the higher education. *Those who will, make it manifest by rising to your feet.* [The congregation rose.] Here is the whole congregation. May God help you to keep your pledge. Let us pray.

[Praying] Heavenly Father, I come to Thee at this time, just as I am, poor, weak, unworthy, and I ask Thee to impress the hearts of this people gathered here today. I have spoken to them Thy words, but, O Lord, Thou alone canst make the word effective, et cetera.--The Review and Herald, April 8, 1909. (Sermon at Oakland, California, Feb. 8, 1909.)