

First State Sunday Law — 314AD

In A.D. 313 the Western Empire became "Christian." In 314 the first State favor was shown for Sunday. In 321 the first direct Sunday law was enacted.

And so it went on with one Sunday law after another, till by 425 every kind of secular work or amusement was strictly forbidden on Sunday. By that time, too, wickedness and corruption of every sort had multiplied in this "Christian" empire to such an extent that the judgment of God in destruction had already begun to fall unchecked. AMS June 22, 1899, page 386.4

Accordingly, one of the first, if not the very first, of the laws secured by the bishops in behalf of the church, was enacted, as it is supposed, **about A.D. 314, ordering that on Friday and on Sunday "there should be a suspension of business at the courts and in other civil offices, so that the day might be devoted with less interruption to the purposes of devotion."** (Neander.) BEST August 30, 1897, page 275.10

To justify this, the specious plea was presented that when the courts and public offices were open and regularly conducted by the state on these church days, the members were hindered from attending to their religious exercises. It was further argued that if the state kept its offices open, and conducted the public business on those days, as the church-members could not conduct the public business and attend to church services both, they could not well hold public offices; and that, therefore, the state was in fact discriminating against the church, and was hindering rather than helping the progress of the kingdom of God. BEST August 30, 1897, page 275.11

This was simply to confess that their Christianity was altogether earthly, sensual, and selfish. It was to confess that there was not enough virtue in their profession of religion to pay them for professing it; and they must needs have the state pay them for professing it. This was in fact in harmony with the whole system of which they were a part. They had been paid by the state in the first place to become professors of the new religion, and it was but consistent for them to ask the state to continue to pay them for the continued profession of it. This was consistent with the system there established; but it was totally inconsistent with every idea of true religion. Any religion that is not of sufficient value in itself to pay men for professing it, is not worth professing, much less is it worth supporting by the state. In genuine Christianity there is a virtue and a value which make it of more worth to him who professes it than all that the whole world can afford—yea, of more worth than life itself. BEST August 30, 1897, page 275.12

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Next, in his epistle summoning the first council, in the autumn of A. D. 313, he calls it "the holyCatholic Church." ARSH May 8, 1900, page 296.16

Next, in the summer of A. D. 314, in his epistle summoning the second council, he referred to the doctrine of the Catholic Church as embodying "**our most holy religion.**" ARSH May 8, 1900, page 296.17

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15. This, however, was but the beginning. The State had become an instrument in the hands of the church, and she was determined to use that instrument to the utmost for her own aggrandizement and the establishment of her power as supreme. As we have seen by many proofs, one of the first aims of the apostate church was the exaltation of Sunday as the chief sacred day. And no sooner had the Catholic Church made herself sure of the recognition and support of the State, than she secured from the emperor an edict setting apart Sunday especially to the purposes of devotion. As the sun was the chief deity of the pagans, and as the forms of sun-worship had been so fully adopted by the apostate church, it was an easy task to secure from the sun-loving and church-courting Constantine, a law

establishing the observance of the day of the sun as a holy day. GEP 477.1